

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 4th November, 1919.

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

ASSENT TO BILLS (4).

Message from the Governor received and read notifying assent to the following Bills:—

- (1) Anzac Day.
- (2) General Loan and Inscribed Stock Act Amendment.
- (3) Justices Act Amendment.
- (4) Mental Treatment Act Amendment.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Mr. Hudson, leave of absence for three weeks granted to Mr. Underwood (Pilbara) on the ground of urgent private business.

BILL—PERTH MINT ACT AMENDMENT.

Read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—LAND TAX AND INCOME TAX.

Second Reading.

Order of the Day read for the resumption from 30th October of the debate on the motion that the Bill be now read a second time, and the amendment by Hon. W. C. Angwin, that "now" be struck out and the words "this day six months" inserted in lieu.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (North-East Fremantle) [4.40]: In view of the state of the finances as disclosed in Saturday's newspapers, which shows that the Premier's forecast is not likely to be realised, I ask leave to withdraw my amendment.

Amendment by leave withdrawn.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

Bill passed through Committee without debate; reported without amendment and the report adopted.

Read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1919-20.

In Committee of Supply.

Resumed from the 30th October; Mr. Stubbs in the Chair.

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

Vote—Public Works and Buildings, £115,000:

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. J. George—Murray-Wellington) [4.45]: I feel that the good sense of the Committee is such that it is hardly necessary for me to make any remarks upon the Estimates of the Public Works Department, because they are not only modest in their requirements, but their requirements cover a very wide area.

Mr. Smith: Give us some information.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I will give what information I can. The total expenditure during last year under the heading Public Works and Buildings was £475,640, made up as follows:—loan £331,027, revenue £104,614, property trust £40,000 less £1, making a total of £475,640.

Hon. P. Collier: It is too much money for one man to spend.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am glad the hon. member recognises the huge responsibility that rests upon my shoulders. That £475,640 is subdivided as follows: salaries £33,077, railway construction £66,329, harbours and rivers £90,042 (the bulk of which is at Fremantle), roads and bridges £39,689, Wyndham freezing works (which are pretty well completed so far as construction is concerned) £149,512, school buildings £23,429, other buildings £63,483, abattoirs, saleyards, etc., £361, and miscellaneous £9,218. The department has a wide scope of duties to attend to. I shall deal with one portion of these duties, which seems to have escaped notice, namely, that of maintenance. In addition to this expenditure from votes the department expended in the maintenance of hotels and sundry repatriation work nearly £3,000, and £54,000 on works for the Commonwealth Government, consisting of the post office buildings, various defence works, and the maintenance of Commonwealth buildings. We also expended £90,000 in connection with the wheat marketing scheme, as will be noticed from the footnote to the Estimates. So far as the buildings which have been erected in this State for dealing with the wheat marketing scheme are concerned, I may say that they stand out as being the cheapest in the Commonwealth. They have been highly commended also as being the best arranged in the Commonwealth for dealing with the work. On the Revenue Estimates last year details of the works were set out in a column headed "Details," and the total estimated cost of these

was £108,963, plus £10,000 for salaries, making a total of £118,963. Only £100,000 of this total was voted, plus £10,000 for salaries. It was thought we should not be able to get the whole of the work through, so we did not ask for all the money we wanted. The actual expenditure, including salaries, was £104,615, showing a balance of £5,385 on the amount voted. We have put down quite a number of works this year, the total coming to about £11,500, but we do not anticipate being able to spend the whole of the money up to the 30th June of next year. We shall make a good try to do so, and will get all the works put in hand, but it is hardly thought we shall be able to get through unless we are exceptionally fortunate this year in putting our Estimates through so much earlier than was the case last year. With regard to salaries, there has been an amount expended on public works salaries going over the previous three years, ranging from 1916-17 £43,000, 1917-18 £38,000, 1918-19, £33,000, this year the estimate being £35,000. How, members will ask, and rightly so, it is that with the reduced staff we have an increased amount on the Estimates this year. The answer is that for many years the grade increases over £204 and statutory increases up to £204 a year have been stopped. This year the officers concerned have received their increases. After going carefully into the matter we came to the conclusion, which previous Governments had been working up to, that the stoppage of the increments was hardly worth while, and that the amount necessary to give these to the civil servants was relatively small compared with the other burdens on the State. We also had the knowledge that the cost of living had increased very much indeed, this having been recognised by the awards of the Arbitration Court for those who are on wages, and pressing quite as heavily on the salaried officers. Consequently, the grade increases and statutory increases were given last year. They account for practically the whole of the increase marked down for the year that is now coming on. The details will show that during 1916-17 the goldfields and agricultural water supplies, combined with the metropolitan water supply, showed a salary expenditure of £46,488, whereas the amount expended last year was £40,482. The estimate for this year, including these increases, is £41,311. The total decrease on the three water supplies is £5,117. As against the £10,000 for salaries apportioned to public works and buildings, and the £3,200 set down for incidentals, we shall also receive recoups from the Commonwealth and other sources to the extent of £5,000. We are doing work for the Commonwealth authorities and others on which we have to employ our own salaried officers, whose salaries are included in the £10,000. We shall receive from the Commonwealth and other sources commission for the work, and if our system of book-keeping would allow us to deduct from the total salaries we pay that

which we receive as commission in return for the work that our salaried officers have given, we would be able to reduce that £10,000 by £5,000. Last year we received from the Commonwealth and the wheat scheme, etc., as commission for work we did by means of our salaried officers £6,488. The expenditure last year on salaries, public works, goldfields and agricultural water supplies, from revenue, loan, and property trust, was £51,429, as compared with the estimate this year of £53,700. Hon. members may draw a comparison from the increase as shown last year and the increase shown on the Estimates this year. But the explanation is that the grade increases were paid for six months only of last year, whereas for the year under review we have to provide for the increase for the whole twelve months. This makes up a difference of about £1,000. The Public Works Department, as is the case with other departments of State, has experienced considerable difficulty and expense in regard to the reinstatement of returned soldiers who, prior to enlistment, were permanent officers. We are endeavouring to place every returned soldier in a billet, but so far as the departments under my control are concerned unfortunately, in a sense, a number of these billets have been abolished, as we found them unnecessary and could carry on the work by altering the system and doing away with what we call red tape and a repetition of work, which did not result in any good. It has caused us, therefore, considerable trouble and pain in doing this in connection with a number of our officers, because we have had to put men out of the service against whom we have had no complaint as to either their work or their conduct. We have had to make room for returned soldiers, and in order to get that room some temporary officers who have done satisfactory work during the last few years have had to make way. There has been another instance in connection with the soldiers returned. Naturally, they do not expect to receive less salary than when they went away. It is happening that in quite a number of cases, in order to put them into positions, they have had to take the place of men who have been receiving a less sum than the soldiers received before they went away. This has added to our expense. Between the 1st July and the 1st September this year eleven soldiers have returned to the Public Works Department, drawing salaries equivalent to £1,956 a year. We were able to put off, transfer or otherwise dispose of, six officers drawing salaries totalling £1,132. We found that in reinstating these soldier civil servants we would have to keep on some other officers for a time in order to coach them and see that the work did not fall off owing to the change.

Mr. Rooke: Were they permanent officers?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: We have taken the temporary and provisional officers for retirement first, but we have quite a number of officers returning to the Public Works Department and to the Water Supply

Department, and when they do get here I am afraid we shall have to see what steps we shall have to take with quite a number of permanent officers to provide employment for returning soldiers. It has been clearly laid down by the utterances of the Premier and others that the soldiers must be placed in employment. That being so, if we have not the holes to put the soldiers in, we shall have to dig such holes, and possibly the present occupants of holes may have to make way.

Hon. P. Collier: But that is not repatriation at all, to put some men off and others on.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It is very hard indeed, especially when one knows that the man now in the position has perhaps heavier obligations than the man for whom he has to make room.

Hon. P. Collier: It ought not to be done at all unless the soldier was in the department before.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The remarks I have made concerning soldiers refer wholly to soldiers who were in the department before the war started. Do what we will, however, there is bound to be considerable trouble and pain. Recently I had before me the case of a man who did his best to go to the war, who was at Blackboy for four months, and five of whose sons went to the war—two of them, I am sorry to say, have not come back. I have to see what I can do for that man. To interpret my present instructions literally would mean putting that man out. However, I am endeavouring to find some means by which I can do that which is due to the man who went to the war and that which is due to the man who tried to go to the war, and the offspring of whose loins went to the war. The Under Secretary writes me that matters have now reached such a stage that permanent officers will have to be dealt with in order to make room for returned soldiers. It is a very serious matter to cope with the aftermath of a world struggle such as we have had. At the same time, we must do our best for the men who went to the war, and we must do our utmost to make matters as easy as possible for those who either were willing to go or sent their sons. Without any idea whatever of belittling those officers who went away, I may point out that it is natural that men who have been away from their work for two or three or four years should have lost touch with it. Such men have had possibly a wider outlook in some respects, but when they return to the narrowed prospect of office work they require, in a sense, coaxing to enable them to get on; though I have no doubt that eventually they will come along all right. Hon. members will see that this year's votes, with the exception of £26,500 provided for road board subsidies, are for ordinary and necessary services, such as are required for the maintenance of existing buildings, jetties, roads, bridges, and so forth.

Mr. Pickering: The other services are necessary too.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That is all right. I value the services which have to be done in the country as highly as may be, but I have had to cut my Estimates in accordance with the dictates of an inexorable Treasurer whose pockets are empty. We have to be prepared, however, for heavy expenditure on maintenance of public buildings. For years before the war the maintenance of public buildings has not been kept up to the mark. It has been put off year after year, because of the exigencies of making ends meet, or for other reasons which those who were actuated by them would no doubt be able to explain if they were here. Our public buildings suffer from lack of repair, lack of paint, and lack of general overhaul. The Public Works supervisors have been instructed to send in regular reports as to the different buildings. The full reports are not yet available, otherwise I should have been in a position to inform the Committee what amount will have to be provided each year in order to put our buildings into proper shape. Of the amount which has been listed for Harbours and Rivers, £29,780, no less than £17,910 is on account of jetties, tramways, and rolling stock in the North-West. I wish to impress upon hon. members, and especially upon newer members, that this North-Western expenditure is going to increase year by year. The jetties there are exposed to great tidal fluctuations and storms, which have a destructive effect upon them, and they are also subject to the teredo in a manner that we in the south can hardly understand. Experiments have been made in the treatment of piles for protection against the teredo, but those experiments have not proved altogether successful. At Wyndham we have now started a scheme of casing the piles with concrete sleeves, which we hope will give a somewhat longer life to those jetties. Eventually, however, I believe we shall have to discard timber entirely for the construction of jetties in the North-West, and use reinforced concrete piles. To show hon. members how this expenditure is creeping up, let me mention that for the year 1916-17 North-Western maintenance cost £5,594, for 1917-18 £9,328, and for last year £9,561. Another item on which I wish to comment is premises rented by the Government. Last year we expended under this head £3,221, which amount, however, does not include the premises of the Industries Assistance Board and the Agricultural Bank. This year the estimate is £2,200, which includes premises rented in different parts of the State. As far as I can see, by Christmas this year we shall have all the metropolitan Government officers housed in Government buildings, and thus shall save the rent we have been paying for privately owned premises. We have already ended the Public Service Commissioner's tenancy of rooms in Surrey Chambers.

Mr. Munsie: What about the Education Department?

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: I hope to shift that department by Christmas. They are now paying £550 a year rent, and in order to obtain an extension of lease the Government have had to agree to an increase of £2 per week in the rent. We shall not pay that increased rental one day longer than can be helped. We have removed the Agricultural Bank from the A.M.P. Buildings, where the bank were paying £2,000 a year rent, into the old Mines Department offices in Hay-street. The cost of altering that building will probably amount to £1,500, but it is now a building which the Managing Trustee of the Agricultural Bank, Mr. Paterson, considers the finest office in Perth. Had we not shifted the Agricultural Bank into that building, we would have had to spend £400 or £500 in order to make the place fit for people to live in. The buildings were dirty and even filthy, and I do not know how the officers previously managed to exist in them. I would not have stabled a respectable pig in them as they were previously. We hope that the State Children Department will be out of their Murray-street offices in a few weeks, thus saving about £200 per annum rent; and we hope soon to have the Fisheries and Aborigines Department removed from the railway building in Beaufort-street for which they are now paying a rental of £200 per annum. With regard to the item of £1,275 for insurance of public buildings, this represents a payment to the Treasury insurance fund, being 1s. per cent. on the capital value of public buildings generally. The item incidentals, £3,200, consists of the following: allowances and travelling expenses £936, railway fares £362, allowances and wages on supervision of Wheat Scheme £846—which will be recouped; postages and telephone rents £184, minor expenses £700. As regards the item for subsidies to road boards, the amount is based on returns received from the various boards showing the amount of rates collected last year. The subsidies vary from 2s. 3d. to 8s. in the pound, according to the physical conditions of the districts themselves. I shall be pleased, as far as lies in my power, to reply to any questions which may be asked by hon. members.

Mr. PICKERING (Sussex) [5.14]: In perusing the Estimates of the Minister for Works my attention has been attracted to the wide difference between the salaries paid to the Chief Engineer for Water Supply and the Chief Architect, respectively. The salary is £804 in one instance, and £636 in the other. It seems to me that the Chief Architect is entrusted with the administration of a large department involving very heavy expenditure.

The CHAIRMAN: I must draw the hon. member's attention to the fact that we are not now dealing with individual items.

Mr. PICKERING: This is one portion of the Estimates with which I shall be unable to deal when we are discussing items as no

item is provided. It is an explanation dealing with commissions for works relating to this position. There is a question of commissions returned by the Commonwealth to the State for services rendered by the State, the control of which services lies with the Chief Architect.

The Minister for Works: About £5,000 a year.

Mr. PICKERING: The Minister says he cannot devote that to any specific purpose, or subtract from it an amount which would be satisfactory to the department. When officers are entrusted with large works such as the supervision of the General Post Office in Perth, one of the biggest works undertaken by the Commonwealth, and one of considerable credit to the Commonwealth and to the State, recognition should be given to the officer concerned for the extra services involved. Although he does not directly control the Workers' Homes Board, he and others were responsible for putting the operations of that board on to a satisfactory basis; yet the officers comprising that board received no extra remuneration for their services.

The Minister for Works: Are you arguing against the water supply engineer?

Mr. PICKERING: No, I do not wish to do that, but merely to illustrate that the other officer should receive a commensurate return for his services. There is a slight decrease in the item of rent for offices, and I am glad to hear that, at the end of the year, it will be swept away.

The Minister for Works: This item is almost entirely for buildings outside the city.

Mr. PICKERING: There is a small increase in the road vote. I congratulate the Minister on this, because it is very urgent to give every possible assistance to road boards throughout the State. In a measure, they are one of the main sources of feeding our railways, and they add very much to the facilities by providing adequate road accommodation. I congratulate the Minister on having increased the vote for the maintenance of buildings. Anyone with a knowledge of buildings and of the loss suffered through neglect to provide sufficient maintenance, must appreciate the necessity for doing our utmost in this direction. In this climate, with its varying temperatures, the exterior of buildings needs constant attention, and a longer period than three years should not elapse if we desire to preserve the utility of these buildings. One has only to travel over our railway system to realise the absolute necessity for attention being given to the various public buildings throughout the State. I regret the Minister has not seen fit to include provision for the maintenance of buildings in my electorate, some of which are in need of immediate attention. There is an item which I hope the Minister will not forget, when he brings down the Loan Estimates, and that is a sum for the provision of a maternity ward at the Busselton hospital. This ward is urgently required and

has received the approval of the Medical Department, who have promised to recommend it to the favourable consideration of the Minister.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (North-East Fremantle) [5.19]: I expected, when the Minister was introducing his Estimates, that he would have made a reply, as he promised to do, in regard to the special information which he has included in the Estimates, to show, if possible, how a reduction has been brought about in the cost of working the department.

The Minister for Works: I thought I had the papers in my bag but I find I have forgotten them.

Hon. P. Collier: I think you had better find them.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Instead of having effected a reduction in the cost of administration, there has been a considerable increase since 1915-16. Almost every time the Minister has introduced his Estimates since then, he has drawn attention to the reduction made in the cost of his department. I pointed out during the general discussion on the Estimates that the only reduction made in the Works Department has been due entirely to a reduction in loan expenditure, and I still maintain that this is so. If members look at the Estimates, they will find that no less than £53,765 is provided for salaries for the administration of the department. It is true the Minister brought the cost down to £10,000 after various charges had been made to loan works and other departments, which had to recoup the Works Department for work carried out for them. The Minister elaborated on that and pointed out that, in all probability, if he could charge the amount of commission received by the wheat scheme—by the way, it is an exceedingly large commission—and the amount of commission which the department were entitled to receive from the Federal Government, there would be little left of the £10,000. Looking up former statements, I find that the total amount spent from revenue on public works in 1915-16 was £488,052. This sum is more than was spent in 1918-19, when the expenditure included loan, revenue and trust money. In other words, more was spent from revenue in 1915-16 than was expended from loan, revenue and trust account in 1918-19. One would have thought, under such conditions, that the Minister would have effected a considerable reduction in the administration of his office. The total amount spent from revenue on public works in 1918-19 was £104,614, compared with £488,052 in 1915-16. Therefore, one could reasonably have expected a reduction in the administrative costs of the office.

The Minister for Works: We have not the number of men.

Hon. P. Collier: Then what are you doing with the money?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The Minister, in his special table, shows that only £475,640 was spent last year, whereas in 1915-16 the

expenditure was £1,115,000, which naturally should bring about a reduction in the percentage. The amount expended from revenue was £488,054, from loan £567,116, and from Government Property Sales Account £59,925, a total of £1,115,093. That was the amount expended in 1915-16. The amount actually paid in connection with public works administration in 1915-16 was £43,291. That was the cost of carrying out work involving an expenditure of nearly 1¼ millions. According to the Minister, there has been a large reduction in the department and the work has been more economically carried out, and yet the total amount estimated for this financial year is £53,765, so that there has been an increase of £10,000. That represents a very large increase, seeing that very little money has been expended.

The Minister for Works: You know perfectly well the water supply is included in that £53,000.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Very little of it.

The Minister for Works: The whole of Oldham's department is in that.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The salary of the Under Secretary is reduced by one-half and the engineer for water supply is represented by a very small amount in comparison with what it was, but the Minister would have us believe that he has effected a great reduction. He would have us believe that it has cost the department only £10,000 for administrative purposes this year. If the deductions were made in the same ratio as the Minister has made them, namely, from loan works and trust fund, the total amount expended in 1915-16 was not £10,000 but £6,848. This proves that any saving has been effected entirely in connection with loan votes. I admit there has been a saving in connection with loan expenditure but, if the department are not carrying out the work, there should not be the same number of officers. If the Government retain the same number of officers, they are doing wrong. The actual cost of administration is paid from consolidated revenue and, instead of there being a saving on this item, there has been an increase, which the Minister attributes to the changed conditions, but the work is costing us more now than it did previously.

Mr. Pickering: The work of supervision?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I am dealing with the general administration. If some of the water supply expenses have been included, others have been struck out. The position is that the percentage charged for the carrying out of public works to-day has never been so high since 1908-09. The cost at present is 6.954 per cent.

The Minister for Works: The percentages are absolutely misleading.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: But that is the only way to strike a comparison. A comparison cannot be struck on the expenditure, or by a statement of the expenditure on works carried out, unless we contrast the figures with those for the previous period.

The Minister for Works: I should not care if it were all one kind of work.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Ever since Federation, the State has been doing Federal work on a 5 per cent. basis, so that does not apply more this year than in other years. The department did not get the special commission last year any more than in any other year since the inauguration of Federation.

Mr. Smith: Do you think 5 per cent. covers the cost?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: On large jobs it pays handsomely, but the work of the Commonwealth includes a lot of small jobs and 5 per cent. would not pay for them. Many of the works on which the department are called upon to report are never done but, under existing conditions and with the high rates of salary ruling, the 5 per cent. basis must be a very small one for the work done. The percentage of administrative cost to work done last year was 6.954. Generally speaking, the 5 per cent. paid by the Commonwealth does reconup the State. Take the General Post Office, running into £300,000; in all probability that will pay the State handsomely. Taking it on the average it was considered a few years ago that it would pay. The Minister stated that in all probability they would have to do away with the use of wood piles at a very early date. There is a man at Fremantle who has been experimenting for many years with a solution which he claims will kill the teredo. I have seen some of the timber treated with the solution, which timber was placed in the water and kept there for some considerable time, and some timber which was also placed in the water without treatment. One was considerably affected by the teredo while the other was barely touched. It was possible to see where the teredo had made a start on the treated timber and left it, while the other timber which had not been treated had been almost eaten away. One might say in this regard that the inventor of this solution is a prophet without honour in his own country. If he had come from some other part of the world, from the United States for instance, in all probability some use might have been made of his discovery.

The Minister for Works: Are you not aware that we have given him every facility for carrying on his trials?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Yes, I am aware that he has had assistance from the department and I know that his trials have turned out splendidly, but the officers of the department appear to be afraid to carry out tests on a large scale.

The Minister for Works: You call at the office and I will show you the file.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I have seen timber which has been treated and timber which has not been treated. The timbers were placed in the water, side by side, and the difference in those timbers when they were removed from the water was wonderful. If when I was in charge of the Works Department, a matter of this description had been brought

under my notice I should certainly have ordered an exhaustive trial to be made.

The Minister for Works: We have made a trial.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Yes, but not as complete as it should have been. The timber that was tested in the Fremantle harbour gave exceedingly satisfactory results, and those who saw it were struck by the marvellous effect the solution appeared to have had on the teredo.

The Minister for Works: We supplied the special timber and a really good test was made.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: How long ago?

The Minister for Works: About a year ago.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The timbers were taken to Mr. Lane-Poole and he was very much struck with the result of the experiments. The solution should also be given a trial in the North-West to see whether in those parts it will have the effect claimed for it. The trials which have been made, while they have been successful in their way, have not given the man a fair show. Tests have been conducted with oregon as well as with our own timbers, and pieces of treated and untreated oregon have been put in the water, and after being removed, while one was found to be almost completely eaten away, the other was barely touched. With regard to the Estimates, we must not be deluded into believing that because the figures show there is less expenditure, there has been a saving. The Works Department is a department which can show a greater saving than any other department. If hon. members will look carefully into the Estimates they will find that there is an increase instead of a decrease. They will see that by comparing the figures of 1915-16 with the Estimates which are before the Committee.

The Minister for Works: We are going on the same lines as those which you followed.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: That is what I am trying to show, but the Minister claims to have done much better. I say he has not done so. Owing to the decrease in loan expenditure there has been a decrease in the number of officers whose salaries have been paid from loan. The Minister has been compelled again to keep his expenditure as low as possible. Public buildings however must have attention. I notice that no provision is made for subsidies to municipalities. I think for the first time the Property Trust Account has been exceeded. In other words, we have an estimate of the money the Minister expects to receive instead of the money he has received. This is the first time such a thing has been done. The Minister is going to take good care, should another Government be in power next year, that they will not have a Property Trust Account to work on. I have nothing more to say. I only regret that the Minister has not a few hundred thousand pounds to spend from Consolidated Revenue.

Mr. MONEY (Bunbury) [5.38]: I quite agree with what the member for North-East Fremantle (Mr. Angwin) said in reference to the method of displaying these Estimates. It is noticed that the salaries are given for the past four years, but only one year's expenditure is given, that is, last year.

The Minister for Works: There is nothing behind that.

Mr. MONEY: I am not insinuating that there is anything behind it, but whatever those figures are, whether they be for four, five, or six years, it is the greatest test that can be shown to the House as to whether the methods are economical or practical. We know that the commission paid to an architect for the construction of a house is five per cent., and I think in future it would be a better guide to the Committee if we could have these Estimates displayed in such a way that we could see whether or not the Public Works Department is being carried on on economical lines as is claimed. It would certainly be very useful if we could see the amount that is expended in material and labour, and also what was expended for salaries, administration and travelling expenses. I am under the impression that a considerable saving can be effected in this and many other departments by a scheme of decentralisation. Much expenditure in time and money arises from the enormous distances that have to be traversed.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: There are inspectors in the distant places.

Mr. MONEY: Not to the extent that we should like to see. I am quite satisfied that a system of decentralisation would be advantageous to the department generally. I stress again the necessity in connection with future Estimates for showing the percentages.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. J. George—Murray-Wellington—in reply) [5.40]: I am sorry the table appears in the Estimates. I will take care that it is not shown next year. It seems to me to have offended hon. members. The Under Secretary for Works prepared it, not with the idea of putting it in the Estimates, but because I asked him to let me have some information for the Government. He asked me whether it would matter if he put the information in the Estimates, and I replied that I did not care how much information he gave. I do not question the sincerity or motive of the member for North-East Fremantle (Mr. Angwin), but he is wrong. The only way in which we can arrive at a true percentage rate is to dissect the new works entirely from maintenance. Last year was an exceptionally heavy one for replacements in connection with public buildings. All our buildings have been neglected for years. I am not alluding to the neglect on the part of any particular Government, but as I said in my opening remarks, to put these buildings into proper order will be a very big item indeed. Some of the buildings have never had a coat of paint for 30 years and

some of the public offices which have been dealt with have never even had the walls kalsomined or white-washed or even cleansed since the time they were built. The hon. member has quoted some figures, to which I cannot reply at the moment. I am sure, however, that he is sincere though wrong in his deductions. At the same time it must be remembered that there has been an amalgamation of the Water Supply Department with the Public Works Department. Until this amalgamation took place the Public Works Department for some years had had nothing to do with the goldfields, agricultural, or metropolitan water supplies. Now it controls them again, and the Under Secretary for Works, Mr. Munt, who draws £650 a year, has taken the place of himself and Mr. Trethowan, who was Under Secretary of Water Supply at a similar salary. Then again there has been an amalgamation of the accounts branches. There are 76 fewer officers to-day than there were two years ago in the Public Works and Water Supply Departments. I cannot tell hon. members from memory the exact number, but the fact remains that that is so, and the salaries of those officers who are no longer there have not been distributed amongst the officers who are remaining. I am sorry I have not the papers with me. I should have brought them but for the fact that I was not aware these Estimates would come on to-day. I could have shown hon. members where the savings were effected. However, we now have 26 officers in the wooden building at the foot of these grounds, doing accounts work, which 53 officers did before, and those 26 officers are not drawing the salaries of the men who were previously engaged. There can be no question that there has been a reduction. I have done what anyone occupying my position would have done, that is, cut out superfluous work, and where the duties could be re-allocated, that has been done. We have had officers who were as cats not catching mice, but we have adopted newer methods and made economies accordingly.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You have been able to show a reduction in loan expenditure.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Unless some means are found for giving me money from loan expenditure soon, I shall have to seriously consider the entire disbandment of the Public Works Department, except such portion of it as is necessary for maintenance. I am sorry the hon. member should seem to think that Mr. Haddy has not had full consideration. I offered Mr. Haddy a sum of money to prepare a certain quantity of timber, but for some reason or another he has not availed himself of the offer. However, we have supplied him with some special pieces of timber for treatment. There is no attempt on the part of the department to shroud the value of any discovery by Mr. Haddy or anybody else. Another Fremantle man wrote me only this week, announcing that he has a means of treating piles against teredo. I have made arrangements to meet

him next week. If there is anything good in his discovery, I will take care that he is fully protected before he makes public his process. The member for Sussex drew attention to an apparent anomaly between the chief engineer of water supply and the principal architect. The hon. member should be a better judge than I of the proper salary of the principal architect. However, I may tell him that the increase in regard to Mr. O'Brien came about in this way: the goldfields water supply having been amalgamated with the supply of the agricultural areas in order that the whole might be administered by one engineer and one staff instead of two, the value of the position was appraised by the Public Service Commissioner, advertisements were published, and applications adjudged. That is why that increase appears there. Mr. Oldham is no longer in the department. As for the Principal Architect, he has his statutory increase, the same as other officers.

Hon. P. Collier: But architectural work, of course, cannot be compared with engineering work.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The responsibility on the engineer of the goldfields water supply, not merely for the life of the main, but also for the lives of the people on the goldfields, is a very serious matter indeed, and although in certain respects it cannot compare with the artistic work of an architect, the burden of responsibility is greater and continuous.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Then the water supplies of the agricultural areas and of the goldfields have been amalgamated?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes. Mr. Oldham and Mr. Hickson have both gone, and Mr. O'Brien is administering the amalgamated scheme.

Item, Under Secretary for Public Works and Trading Concerns, and for Water Supply, Sewerage, and Drainage, £472:

Mr. LUTEY: I should like to know what steps have been taken to provide a supply of pipes, and whether those pipes can be furnished by the State Implement Works?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I understand that 500 tons of pig iron have left Newcastle for this State. I have not been able to get an ounce of pig iron for the State Implement Works, but I am going to try to get some from the Railway Department. We intend to make up the pipes that will shortly be required. The hon. member need not be afraid of a shortage of water on the new find, because Mr. O'Brien assures me that the supply can be easily dealt with.

Mr. JONES: I should like the Minister to explain these grade rises and tell us why the Under Secretary of Public Works, one of the finest public servants we have, who is controlling a highly responsible work, receives only £22, while other officers receive increases of £100 and over?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: This officer got part of it last year and the balance this year.

Mr. Jones: Even then he is not getting £672. Some other officers have risen to £800.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: When Mr. Munt became Under Secretary for Public Works and Water Supply his salary was raised from £600 to £650, that being the salary of Mr. Trethowan, the then Under Secretary of Water Supply, whose position was abolished. Had it not been for that, Mr. Munt's salary would have been increased from £600 to £636, and in the following year he would have got another £36, bringing him to £672. In the one £50 rise he had a grade increase and part of another. The increase shown this year brings him into line with other officers.

Mr. SMITH: Is it not false economy to load up a competent officer like Mr. Munt? He is Under Secretary for Public Works, Under Secretary for Water Supply, and Under Secretary for Trading Concerns, on top of which he has been appointed a member of a commission to inquire into the grievances of public servants. This method of loading a willing horse is to be entirely deprecated. Does the Minister propose to continue the system, or would it not be better to split up the work among two or three good men?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I appreciate the hon. member's sympathy with the Under Secretary for Public Works. I do not think the officer is unduly worked, but I know he has plenty of responsibility. The work of the under secretary in looking after the inner administration of the department has not, so far as I know, been found to be beyond his capacity.

Mr. O'Loghlen: This under secretary has not the responsibility of some of the others.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Possibly not.

Mr. O'Loghlen: Because you take the bulk of it yourself.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes, but I have a good man and I appreciate him. In regard to the water supply of the metropolitan area, we have a very efficient officer in Mr. Haywood, who is in the same position as Mr. Munt. His work is being very well carried out.

Mr. Smith: Then Mr. Munt is only an ornament?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No, he is not, but we would not have been in the position we are in to-day in regard to the water supply of the metropolitan area but for Mr. Haywood and the new system. We have a larger amount of money collected at present than for many years past.

Mr. Smith: By sending out accounts for one penny!

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No, there was a time when such accounts were sent out, but the people who did that have been sacked. For over 18 months not a single account for less than sixpence has been sent out.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The Under Secretary for Public Works is a good officer but I am afraid he is being over-worked. He

is Under Secretary for State brick works, State sawmills, and metropolitan water supply, agricultural areas water supply and other water supplies such as Northam, Goomalling, Dowerin, Katanning, Wagin, etc., and for the goldfields water supply. He looks after the Public Works Department and is now appointed a Public Service Commissioner.

Hon. P. COLLIER: It is pleasing to know that in the Public Works Department there are such excellent and competent officers, but there is a possibility of over-working the willing horse. Mr. Munt is a first-class officer, but he must be over-worked. The position of Under Secretary for Works and Water Supply was previously held by two officers. Mr. Munt has now been appointed one of the Commissioners under the Rights in Water and Irrigation Act. He has also been appointed a member of the board to deal with the civil service.

The Minister for Works: I do not think that will take much of his time.

Hon. P. COLLIER: If officers are over-worked, there must be a decrease in their efficiency in the positions to which they were originally appointed. If the work in connection with the public service board is done thoroughly, it must occupy a great deal of Mr. Munt's time. There is a danger that the Minister will work his willing officers too hard.

Item, Chief Engineer, Water Supply, £804:

Mr. WILLCOCK: What has Mr. O'Brien done in connection with the Geraldton water supply? The departmental officers have travelled all over the country in the district in search of a water supply, but so far have not reported any success.

Mr. JOHNSTON: I should like to know what is being done with regard to the Narrogin water supply. Narrogin is the only town of that size in the State that is without a water supply. None of the schemes put forward by the engineers has yet been carried into effect.

Mr. MUNSIE: I wish to refer to the attitude of the Public Works Department in regard to the employment of returned soldiers. Of course no man who was employed in the department prior to his enlistment should be debarred from going back to his position on his return. I know of a case, however, in which a man after 18 years in the Water Supply Department has been dismissed to make room for a returned soldier, who was not in the department at the time he enlisted. The officer I speak of has been an inspector, but has now received notice that although there is no fault to find with his work he will have to go. He is now 52 years of age and was too old to go to the Front himself. I have heard of other instances of this kind. I favour assistance being rendered to repatriate our returned soldiers, but I say this is not repatriation: it is an injustice to the man in question.

The Minister for Works: I will get all the information upon the subject and let the hon. member know.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The member for Geraldton referred to the Geraldton water supply, which has been a sore subject to Government after Government. It is especially sore just now, owing to the failure of the Buller River scheme. Mr. O'Brien has given a great deal of attention to the matter, and naturally he wants to be perfectly satisfied before he recommends the expenditure of further money on that scheme. The matter is receiving the closest attention. The member for Williams-Narrogin inquired about a water supply for Narrogin. The Railway Department have been searching for a supply there, and have found one; and the Government think it well to inquire whether that supply would meet the requirements not only of the department but also of the town of Narrogin. Next week I hope to be in a position to give full information on that subject. With the remarks of the member for Menzies regarding returned soldiers, I think the whole Committee will agree. I shall have full inquiries made regarding the case of Mr. Austin, who worked under me in the early days of the Perth Water Supply, from 1890 to 1894. If hon. members knowing of similar cases will communicate with me, I will give them full consideration.

Item, Principal Architect, £636:

Mr. PICKERING: I do not wish it to be thought that I am unfairly comparing the position of the Chief Engineer for Water Supply with that of the Chief Architect. I merely wish to point out that the Chief Architect is entirely responsible for the work of his department, and that he has much the greater responsibility. Therefore I should be glad if the Minister could see his way to increase the Chief Architect's remuneration.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That is not a matter within the power of any Minister. All these salaries are under the Public Service Act, fixed by the Public Service Commissioner, who is the sole arbiter, though no doubt the representations of Ministers would be fully considered by him. I hope that, as times get better, we shall be able to give the Chief Architect a larger staff, when his position would be a more important one and would warrant a higher salary.

Item, Salaries and allowances, £16,923:

Mr. JOHNSTON: What is the present position as regards the lands resumption officer? The permanent holder of the post has been transferred to the Wheat Scheme for the last four or five years, during which period another officer has been performing the duties of land purchase officer at a much lower salary. In the circumstances, the

Government ought to make the acting land purchase officer a special allowance. In fact, he should be paid the same salary as his predecessor. If an official seeks promotion by entering the service of the Wheat Scheme, he should not expect to have another position held open for him for four or five years.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: There was no intention of appointing the land resumption officer, Mr. Hall, permanently to the Wheat Scheme. A promise was made by Mr. Hughes to the wheat buyers that if they assisted the Government in handling the wheat, they would be permitted to return to their normal conditions of trading so soon as the war was over; and that promise was endorsed by the State Governments. However, the Governments sucked the brains of the wheat buyers and then turned those buyers adrift. Mr. Hall was only lent to the Wheat Scheme; but the wheat pool has now lasted for years, and apparently the intention is that the pool shall become a permanent institution. Mr. O'Neill, who is acting as land resumption officer, is a good officer; and I observe he is down for £300 this year. Mr. Hall received £408 a year as land resumption officer.

The Minister for Works: I think Mr. O'Neill gets more than £300.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The Estimates do not show that he gets any more. If Mr. Hall is to remain permanently with the Wheat Scheme, it is only fair that Mr. O'Neill should be permanently appointed land resumption officer, in which capacity he has acted very ably for four years.

The Minister for Works: Mr. O'Neill has done very good work.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: An officer in Mr. O'Neill's present position is adversely affected not only as regards immediate salary, but also as regards retiring allowance.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I cannot speak definitely as to the salary Mr. O'Neill is receiving, but I am under the impression that it is £350. I am perfectly satisfied with his work. He looks after the interests of the State so well that I fear the Public Works Department must be regarded by land owners as an association of Jews. Mr. O'Neill does not pay a penny more than he can help. He has also done very good work in connection with the rearrangement of Government office accommodation, and it is my intention to recommend him for a bonus on the completion of that work. His merits have not been overlooked, as I have minuted the Public Service Commissioner several times on the subject. I not only minuted it, but spoke to him through the telephone when Mr. O'Neill was present. I took the same stand as the member for North-East Fremantle that Mr. Hall, having been so many years with the wheat scheme, should either return to the Works Department or be declared off the staff, and then the man who has been doing the work could be appointed. I do not quite understand the attitude of the Public Service

Commissioner. There seem to be some lions in the path which I cannot knock out of the way but, during the next week or two, I expect to be able to deal with Mr. O'Neill's case and then members can say whether they are satisfied.

Mr. SMITH: What is the trouble with the Public Service Commissioner?

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member cannot discuss the Public Service Commissioner under this item.

Mr. SMITH: I am discussing this officer. It is not at all satisfactory that special arrangements should be made.

Mr. Hudson: There are extraordinary circumstances.

Mr. SMITH: The Minister says he has made recommendations and it is extraordinary if his recommendations can be ignored by the Public Service Commissioner.

The Minister for Works: I did not say "ignored."

Hon. P. Collier: As a matter of fact, it was improper to make a recommendation.

Mr. SMITH: I should like to know the difficulties so that we might help the Minister.

Hon. P. Collier: There are very few difficulties the Minister for Works could not get over.

Mr. SMITH: Apparently he cannot get over the difficulties in regard to Mr. O'Neill's position. Will not he take us into his confidence? It is most unfair that a deserving officer should be kept on the minimum salary because of some imaginary difficulties.

Mr. Hudson: What is drawing your imagination?

Mr. SMITH: I am referring only to what the Minister and the member for North-East Fremantle have told us.

Mr. Hudson: You are labouring a difficulty that does not exist.

Mr. SMITH: It does exist. This officer is doing work in excess of what he is paid for.

Mr. Hudson: You forget there has been a war.

Mr. SMITH: That has not affected other officers. This officer seems to have been singled out.

The Minister for Works: He is occupying the position temporarily.

Mr. SMITH: He seems to be a permanent temporary officer.

Item, Maintenance Perth-Fremantle-road, £1,500:

Mr. JOHNSTON: Although £1,500 is provided for the maintenance of the Perth-Fremantle-road, only £2,800 is provided specially for roads in Western Australia. Of that amount £2,200 is for roads in the metropolitan area. For the main road to the Caves £600 is voted, which seems to be a very proper expenditure, but I cannot understand why the wealthy ratepayers of the metropolitan area should draw on the public purse year after year to have their roads kept in order, while the people in the outback parts of the

State have to maintain their own roads. We have heard a good deal about the Perth-Fremantle-road. The Government had to rebuild it.

The Minister for Works: At a cost of £26,000.

Mr. JOHNSTON: And there has been no desire to repay that amount as I understand the local authorities at the time agreed to do. To test the feeling of the Committee on the principle whether the people in the districts between Perth and Fremantle should maintain their own roads or continue to sponge on the general taxpayer as they are doing, I move an amendment—

That the item be reduced by £1,499.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: If this item is knocked out, there is an amount of £15,000 later in the Estimates for country roads districts which the member for Williams-Narrogin must agree to knock out also.

Mr. Johnston: The metropolitan road boards come into that as well.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: No, they do not get a sixpence out of it. Then there is a general vote on the Loan Estimates, sometimes of £15,000 to £20,000, which the country road districts also share.

Mr. Johnston: There are three special grants.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: If the hon. member votes to knock out one he must vote to knock out the other as well.

The CHAIRMAN: We have already passed the other item, roads and bridges throughout the State including subsidies to road boards, £26,500.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: That item is for subsidies to road boards. There is another item of £15,000 later on. The total of all the items provided amounts to £40,000 or £50,000 to assist roads throughout the country.

Mr. Hudson: You have to justify this expenditure on the Perth-Fremantle-road.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: With the passage of the Traffic Bill, no doubt the Minister will be able to spend money which otherwise he could not have spent. It is impossible for the local authorities to keep the Perth-Fremantle-road in order. The bulk of the traffic comes from Perth and Fremantle, and the road can be kept in proper repair only by the Government.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I suppose this is one of the little jokes of the member for Williams-Narrogin. He must realise that we cannot have gone on for four months of the financial year without having spent some of this money. The Perth-Fremantle road cost the Government £26,000 some years ago and we tried to make arrangements to get that money repaid, but unsuccessfully. The local authorities are absolutely determined and obstinate. They will allow the road to be worn down to the sand and to become dangerous and will not do anything. No Government could have allowed that road to go to pieces. We

do not spend any money on the maintenance of the 2½ miles of road along Mount's Bay in the Perth city council area, nor do we spend one penny for repairs at Fremantle. The £1,500 is spent to keep in order that portion of the road between North Fremantle to about Nedlands. If it is possible to bring in a Main Roads Bill next year, we shall have to consider the question of main roads as being almost of as much importance as railways. The roads of the State will have to be dealt with in a comprehensive way. We shall have to convince the different local authorities that they must do something and must not permit the roads to go to pieces. Unless traffic is made easy and comfortable by the provision of good roads, we shall not get the development we should have. The city of Perth really ought to pay 45 per cent. of the £1,500, and Fremantle about 17 per cent. That would leave 38 per cent. to be divided among the local authorities; but could we put that expense upon them when the bulk of the traffic originates in Perth and Fremantle and is passing from Perth to Fremantle and from Fremantle to Perth? That is one of the main arguments. The Perth city council are fighting against the pooling of the license fees, because they have been receiving license fees from vehicles which have been tearing up the roads, and not spending a cent to repair the roads that are being knocked out. They are endeavouring to get members of another place to alter the Traffic Bill. Swan-street, North Fremantle, for which £1,700 is provided for reconstruction, represents a bare act of justice. That road was torn to pieces by Government traffic, both State and Commonwealth.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: This road was constructed out of loan money. The North Fremantle authorities borrowed the money, and the ratepayers are paying loan rates for the making of that road. Just after the road was completed the Government resumed all the land but did not resume the road, which is now of no use to the district. It is merely a right-of-way to the Fremantle harbour, the Government abattoirs, and the Government stores. No one else uses it.

Amendment put and negatived.

Item, Fremantle-road bridge—lighting, maintenance, etc., £1,980:

Mr. SMITH: This item shows an increase from £421 to £1,980. Will the Minister explain why the increase is so large? If we are to be saddled with such heavy expenditure for maintenance it might be advisable to build a new bridge.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The bridge has been in use for many years. Wear and tear has affected its safety; consequently it is necessary to provide a sum which will make the bridge safe for the trams and for the heavy vehicular traffic. There is a lot of re-decking to be done, and portion of the under-structure has to be replaced and there is also some nervousness in regard to the piles. There will not be one

penny spent on that bridge which can be avoided.

Item, Perth Causeway, lighting and maintenance, £800:

Mr. SMITH: I understand that in this instance the local authorities have thrown the maintenance of the Causeway on the Government. What is the policy of the Government in regard to the Causeway? If this bridge is to cost the State a large sum of money every year it might be better for the Government to take the matter in hand and make a thorough job of it. If the £800 were capitalised, about £16,000 would be obtained, and something could be done. At the present time the Causeway is a deathtrap; it is quite unsafe.

The Minister for Works: Oh, no.

Mr. SMITH: How many accidents have occurred there during the last few years? More people have been killed on the Causeway than on all the other roads put together.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: There is nothing unsafe about the Causeway. If men and women are not prepared to take ordinary precautions for their own safety, why blame an unfortunate bridge like the Causeway? If the member for North Perth can find £40,000 I promise him I will put a new bridge across there. The majority of people who use that bridge are satisfied. Of course we would like it much wider, but we cannot afford to pay for the widening.

Item, Dredging plant not in use—depreciation and maintenance, £900:

Mr. SMITH: Last year £208 was spent on this vote. The plant is still out of use and this year it is going to cost £900. Would it not be better to sell the plant or put a plug of dynamite into it? Better still, it might be advisable to put the plant into use.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: We have a lot of dredging plant which has to be looked after. A caretaker is employed and he has to be paid. If we did not have a caretaker people would go on board the plant and take away many things. At one time they took all the brass from the dredges and it cost the State £130 to replace that brass. Moreover, the money is to be spent in repairing the dredging parts which are worn out, particularly the buckets which have to be re-plated and re-steeled.

Item, Fremantle foreshore repairs, £250:

Mr. ROCKE: This item and the succeeding item, which provides £3,500 for Fremantle sea wall and esplanade, might be taken together. The Minister yesterday saw one portion of the road which had to be constructed by the municipality, which road had been entirely washed away. It is not possible for the municipality to remake that road until the breakwater is complete.

The Minister for Works: You are quite aware that the work is to be started in a few days.

Mr. ROCKE: The sum of £250 will not cover the cost of the breakwater in front of that road.

In connection with a similar problem in New Zealand it was necessary to build a wall concrete blocks, the lightest of which weigh 15 tons. I hope to see more money spent than is provided in the Estimates, so as to make a complete job.

Mr. LAMBERT: This is not an opportune time to indulge in expenditure of this description without adequate explanation being given.

The Minister for Works: The mayor and councillors of Fremantle got all the explanation necessary yesterday and were quite satisfied with it. I do not know why the members for South Fremantle raised the question today.

Mr. LAMBERT: That is no reason why we should allow the Estimates to go through without asking questions.

The Minister for Works: Do you object to the expenditure?

Mr. LAMBERT: Members of the Committee should know whether this expenditure is absolutely essential. There are many other avenues for spending money, avenues which will have the effect of developing the country. The Minister should give us some explanation. Without it the expenditure seems to me unnecessary.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Although £3,500 is here set down for the work, probably only £750 of it will be expended this summer, because the Treasurer is not able to find me any more. That amount, it is estimated, will make the place quite safe until the approach of next winter, when it is hoped to continue the work. The reason why the repairs are necessary is because the sea has done a lot of damage, washed away the parapet and the street and undermined the railway.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The statement by the Minister that while £3,500 is provided in the Estimates it is intended to spend only £750 is illuminating. If the Estimates have been prepared on this principle right through it seems likely that we shall wipe out our deficit.

The Minister for Works: No, nothing of the kind.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The Minister says that not more than £750 will be expended until the beginning of next winter. If the vote is not expended by the 30th June next year, it must lapse. I admit that the work is really necessary. The sea wall is really only a temporary affair not capable of resisting the waves. If the Minister can render the wall more enduring it will be money well spent.

Mr. JOHNSTON: Is this the esplanade on which the member for Fremantle is denied the right of free speech?

Mr. Lambert: No, they are extending it so as to make more room for free speakers.

Mr. JOHNSTON: It seems an anomaly that the Government should provide the money for repairing the embankment on the ground behind it while the municipal council controls it. Seeing that the Govern-

ment find the money, why should not the Government control the esplanade?

Mr. ANGELO: It appears the Government have to find money for repairs to this work. Some years ago we had foreshore troubles in Carnarvon, a lot of damage being caused by flood waters. The Government made it clear to us that they would not effect the repairs unless we found part of the money, and so the people of Carnarvon had to raise £2,000, on which they are paying interest and sinking fund to-day. If small municipalities have to do that, why should a rich municipality like Fremantle not be called upon to do the same?

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The hon. member is overlooking the fact that these repairs are to protect the railway.

Mr. ANGELO: Well, it is wrongly itemised.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: No, the railway runs between the road and the sea.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: The Minister says that only £750 is to be spent, leaving £2,750 unspent. How long will this remain unspent?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: There is difficulty just now in getting explosives, and therefore we do not expect to spend more than £750 for the time being.

Item, Maintenance of jetty tramways in the North-West, £2,150:

Mr. PICKERING: In the preceding and subsequent items provision is made for different tramways on jetties in the North-West, yet we find this general item of £2,150. The Estimates provide £1,000 for the Onslow jetty, £1,300 for the Point Sampson jetty, £500 for Port Hedland, and £510 for Carnarvon, while no provision whatever is made for the maintenance of jetties in the South-West.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: We cannot get out of expending money on the jetties of the North-West. We must have these jetties in good repair so that our State boats can use them. I have already explained that the jetties up there suffer considerably from the torredo.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: And from fire.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes, and politicians and God knows what else besides. New piles have been riddled by the torredo in twelve months and have had to be replaced. As for jetties in the South-West, if the Busselton jetty were extended a little further, it would reach Africa. In any case, that jetty is under, not my control, but the control of the Minister for Railways.

Item, Margaret River-Flinder's Bay railway—wages and working expenses, £500:

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I should like to know the Government policy in regard to this railway authorised by Parliament many years ago. It is farcical to have such authorisation without making any attempt to build the railway.

The Minister for Works: I think there is an objection to the proposed route.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Even if there is a difference of opinion on that score it should not serve to hold up the work. What is going to be done to link up this white elephant with our existing system? No revenue can be derived from it until the connection is made. This railway from Busselton to Margaret River has been authorised for seven years and the settlers have been buoyed up by the prospect of its construction. The Government are always promising to develop the South-West in order that it may have a chance of redeeming itself. There are localities there which will justify public expenditure on a big scale. The area about to be served is not of uniform quality but a promise is a promise. Are the Government going to redeem the promise they have made? Much of the Agricultural Department's money has been sunk in this part of the State, and yet nothing has been done to develop it since the construction of the railway was agreed to.

The Minister for Works: There has been some clearing done.

Mr. Johnston: When there has been an election coming on.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: At election time a clearing gang is sent out, and the farmer is deluded into thinking that something is going to be done. The Government will have to make a start with this railway during the next 12 months. Several other railways which have been sanctioned have been built, but this particular railway, although it has been sanctioned, is still held up. The settlers in this area have not a fighting chance of making good under present conditions.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The present Government have made no promise to build this railway. The sum of £500 is set down for wages and working expenses. We do get a revenue from this railway. The caretaker runs a motor trolley up and down, and we have just had constructed at the State Implement Works a special lorry capable of carrying two tons of fish at a time. I cannot give the hon. member the policy of the Government in regard to this railway. The matter is being taken into consideration on the Loan Bill, which is now in the care of the Treasurer. Until that consideration is given to the matter I can have nothing to say upon it myself.

Mr. PICKERING: This item in the past was spent for a trolley which was capable of carrying half a ton of produce to the sea coast. People who had two or three tons of produce to remove found that they had to make so many trips that they could not get their produce to the coast in time to catch the ship that might be there to take it away. The railway has been promised to my constituents for many years and some of my constituents have lived in the district for half a century. I fully appreciate the area in the South-West suitable for settlement. There is a very large area, but not such an area as stated by the Premier. I trust that in future hon. members will re-

frain from condemning me in respect of my supposed views on the South-West or my supposed views on the route of this railway.

Mr. SMITH: The Minister has said that a motor trolley has been constructed for the purpose of conveying the limited traffic available in the district here concerned. I have always advocated motor trains on spur railways, and therefore I am interested in knowing how the experiment progresses, particularly from the point of view of revenue and expenditure and as to the ability of the motor train to serve the needs of the district.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Not having the papers here because I did not expect to be asked the question, I am not able to say what the revenue is exactly. I believe it is about £500. The trolley was tried at the State Implement Works, and except on the score of noise the trial was satisfactory, the trolley travelling at about 25 miles per hour. The State Sawmills run a motor train from Big Brook to Jarnadup for passengers and goods. They use a trolley which can convey about 16 passengers and about two tons of goods, and the running is very satisfactory. The revenue is considerably more than the cost. In any case, the running of the motor trolley represents a considerable saving, because it obviates the need of a train for the sake of a few passengers and a few parcels. I think the Railway Department will find it to their advantage to have something similar on their country lines. Motor ambulances of this kind should be placed at country stations for the conveyance of accident cases.

Item, Education Department buildings, £8,000:

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: A couple of years ago office premises were leased by the Education Department because they had no proper office accommodation. Has the Minister arranged for the vacation of those rented premises?

The Minister for Works: I hope to have those premises vacated by Christmas.

Item, Narrogin Hospital, Renovations and improvements, £315:

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Have the Narrogin people been asked to subscribe to this work? The people of Fremantle recently had to guarantee £1,000 before similar work was undertaken there.

Mr. JOHNSTON: I am surprised that the humanitarian feelings of the member for North-East Fremantle have not prevented him from attacking this particular item. There are two private hospitals in Narrogin, and all the local people of any means are compelled to make use of those private hospitals, the Narrogin public hospital being mainly filled with people from outlying districts. The small additions for which this item provides have been rendered necessary by the influenza outbreak. Had the member for North-East Fremantle seen the splendid body of local women who went into the Narrogin public hospital to carry on the work for several weeks when all the nurses except

one were stricken down with influenza, he would not have cast reflections on the people of Narrogin.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The member for North-East Fremantle knows just as well as I do that these items are put forward by other departments, whose reasons for doing so are no concern of the Public Works Department. I know nothing about the Narrogin hospital in particular, but I know that hospitals throughout the country have had a great deal of extra work thrown upon them by the influenza outbreak.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Help of the kind referred to by the member for Williams-Narrogin has been given in every town in the State.

Mr. Johnston: But the influenza outbreak was more severe at Narrogin than elsewhere, in proportion to population.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I think the outbreak was most severe in Fremantle. Why should Narrogin get more assistance than any other town? As a matter of fact the residents of Narrogin, one of the most flourishing towns in the Great Southern district, repudiate any responsibility for contributing to the Narrogin Public Hospital, saying "Let the outside districts contribute."

Item, Geraldton residency, re-roofing, etc., £500:

Mr. SMITH: This item seems to be very heavy. It should be enough almost to rebuild the place.

The Minister for Works: A lot of structural alterations are necessary.

Hon. P. Collier: Then the item is not correctly described.

Mr. WILLCOCK: The residency was built 40 or 50 years ago. Consisting of 17 or 18 rooms, it stands alongside the beach, and the action of the salt air and water has made the roof leak. At the present cost of iron, the estimate is reasonable. The public buildings in Geraldton were roofed with shingles at a cost of £900, because iron was too dear. These repairs are absolutely necessary.

Item, Shark Bay school, renovations and repairs, £125:

Mr. PICKERING: How is it that such a remote place can get attention and other places under the purview of officers of the department, and equally in need of repairs, are not noticed? The public buildings at Busselton are absolutely neglected.

Hon. P. Collier: Why pick Shark Bay?

Mr. PICKERING: Because the member representing it is here to defend it.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: All the items with which we have been dealing during the last half hour come under my purview when I am told to do the work. I do not ask the Minister for Education how he came to deal with Shark Bay and neglect Busselton. We are the mechanics of the family, and as mechanics we carry ourselves well.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: The Minister has told us he is obliged to do the work when he gets instructions. My only charge is that he slows down on the job. He shows remarkable expedition with regard to many of the activities of his department, but the instructions of the Education Department are often held up for an inordinately long time.

The Minister for Works: At times we have to call for tenders.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: A school in the bush was urgently required. There were about 30 children and there was no possibility of getting the department to move. They were building up a file bigger than the school, and the youngsters for eight or nine months had no tuition at all.

The Premier: We shall see that it does not happen again.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I hope the Minister with his business acumen and aggressive spirit will deal with such matters more expeditiously.

The Minister for Works: What is the school?

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: The Jarrahdale Bush Landing, but the same thing applies right through the timber areas. When a school has to be removed or constructed, the children are often kept an inordinately long time without instruction. They are not getting the advantages of city children, owing to the circumlocution of the Public Works Department.

The Minister for Works: If I had the file, you would apologise to the Works Department at once.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: No, it is an absolute fact. A difficulty arose between Millar's, who were asked to do some of the work, and the department, who had tenders in hand. I want the Works Department to get on to these jobs quickly.

The Minister for Works: After this session, we shall have a bit of a rest.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: The Minister is trying to rush through his Estimates.

The Minister for Works: I knew Jarrahdale before you.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Yes, the Minister shot the widow's pigs down there. The time to attend to the children of school-going age is when their minds are plastic and receptive. Will the Minister give his assurance that—

The Minister for Works: Yes, with both hands.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: The Minister will do anything to get his Estimates through. This is the only opportunity we have to point out the maladministration of his department.

The Minister for Works: I have three telephones.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Yes, and when one rings up there is such a buzzing that one is nearly driven mad. I do not know if the typists use the telephones to make appointments to go out. If the Minister will speed up and not adopt I.W.W. tactics, I shall be satisfied.

Item, Crawley estate and camping area, maintenance, wages and minor works, including road approach, £80:

Hon. P. COLLIER: All this is to be provided for £80?

Mr. O'Loghlen: No one but the Minister could do it for the money.

Hon. P. COLLIER: This is probably the most popular holiday resort in and around the city but, with the crowds of visitors during the summer months, the smaller trees are being broken down and destroyed. It will be only a few years when the point will be entirely useless as a holiday resort for children, owing to the lack of shade. The Minister should at once get to work and plant trees of rapid growth to provide shade for the people who will flock there in the years to come. The Works Department have taken over the responsibility of maintaining this park, and should see that shade is provided. The trees can be obtained from the Woods and Forests Department free of cost, and an expenditure of a few pounds only would be necessary to pay for planting them.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: I shall look into the matter and, if it lies within my province, I shall endeavour to get the trees planted during next winter.

Item, Geraldton public buildings, re-roofing, £177:

Mr. SMITH: There seems to have been a tornado at Geraldton. Last year £629 was spent for this same work.

Mr. Willecock: That is the balance; the work has been spread over two years.

Item, Grants in aid, agricultural halls, mechanics' institutes, etc., £1,000:

Mr. GRIFFITHS: No sum was provided last year. I take it this amount is intended to redeem past promises and not to revive the vote.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: Certain promises were made before the war. All the conditions laid down by the Government had been fulfilled and, in some cases, it was proved to the satisfaction of the Works Department that authority for the payment of the subsidy had been made. It has been the unfortunate duty of the Minister for Works to hold over these accounts until this year, when the Treasurer thought he would try to find enough to fulfil the old promises. Later applications have been filed in the order in which they have been received and, when funds become available, the necessary information will be at the disposal of the Minister to enable him to act fairly and justly.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I have no fault to find with the Government for curtailing this grant. Under stress of financial circumstances they have held over these amounts to agricultural halls and mechanics' institutes. I should like a promise from the Minister that past promises will be redeemed. A hall was built near Collie, and five out of the seven members of the committee went to the Front and the other two were summoned

for the balance of about £50. This was held over, but there was a promise from the late Treasurer that the amount would be made available. The then Treasurer gave me an assurance that he would pay the £50, but he was obliged to go to Melbourne, and he and his colleagues it will be remembered cooled their heels over there for two or three months. Unfortunately, the day before the Treasurer went away to Melbourne he forgot to approve of the payment of the £50, but he has since written a letter to the department stating that he had agreed to provide the sum.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: If a Minister of a previous Government makes a promise it is incumbent upon the Minister who follows him to honour that promise. I will do so.

Mr. JOHNSTON: With regard to these halls, in a large number of localities people who are not able to get grants, build the halls themselves and guarantee the money. Am I to understand, in the event of grants being revived, that in localities where people did not build halls for themselves, those localities will receive attention in preference to others wherein the residents themselves guaranteed the money? The people who helped themselves in my opinion are deserving of first consideration.

Mr. PICKERING: A promise was made by the member for North-East Fremantle when he was Minister for Works that the Capel hall would receive some consideration.

The Minister for Works: The Capel hall has had more money spent on it than any other place.

Mr. Angwin: You were lucky if you got a promise from me.

Mr. PICKERING: If the Minister for Works will, as he states, honour promises made by Ministers who have gone before him, the payment of the amount which was promised for the Capel hall should also be made.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: In regard to those places where settlement of returned soldiers is taking place, has any arrangement been made to provide halls for recreation or for other purposes? I made an application to the authorities but that application was refused, and I was asked to bring the matter under the notice of the Minister when the vote was being considered. I would like to know whether anything can be done in the way of providing halls where soldier settlements exist.

A Scene.

The Minister for Works: There is no vote out of which money can be provided for the purpose asked by the hon. member. With regard to the request of the member for Sussex, I can only say that he lacks decency.

Mr. Pickering: I ask that the Minister withdraw that expression.

The Minister for Works: I shall not withdraw it.

Mr. Pickering: On a point of order, I ask that the Minister withdraw that expression, that I lacked decency.

The Minister for Works: I shall not withdraw.

Mr. Chairman: When an hon. member requests that an expression to which he takes exception should be withdrawn, the member using that expression on being asked to withdraw it should do so.

The Minister for Works: I shall not withdraw.

Hon. P. Collier: The Minister must obey the Chair.

The Chairman: The word "indecent" was used by the Minister for Works towards the member for Sussex. Did the Minister for Works refer to the hon. member personally, or in what sense did he use the expression?

The Minister for Works: In a Pickwickian sense.

The Chairman: At any rate, it is altogether an unparliamentary expression.

Mr. Pickering: I insist upon the expression being withdrawn. The Minister for Works made no comment in regard to other hon. members when they preferred a request similar to mine, and I ask that I be treated by the Minister with similar courtesy.

The Minister for Works: I shall not withdraw.

Hon. T. Walker: The usual practice is that if an hon. member uses language to which objection is taken, language which is indecorous or offensive, the Chairman asks for a withdrawal. If the member who uses that language refuses to withdraw, the Chairman's course is to report the matter to the House. There can be no exception, because the member who uses offensive language occupies a distinguished position in the House. It is your duty Mr. Chairman to insist upon the words being withdrawn.

The Chairman: Other hon. members called attention to the fact that certain promises had been made with regard to wants in their electorates and the member for Sussex rising, as he thought he was justified in doing, drew the attention of the Minister to a want in his own particular electorate. It was not fair on the part of the Minister to have singled him out and described his request as an act of indecency. The member for Sussex has taken exception to the use of that word and the Minister must withdraw it.

The Minister for Works: I made use of the expression "lack of decency" in regard to the member for Sussex and that is my opinion of him as an individual. I do not see that I am called upon to withdraw.

The Chairman: The member for Sussex has taken exception to the words, and it is the rule of the House that when an hon. member calls attention to what he thinks is an offensive expression used towards himself, the member using that expression must withdraw. I ask the Minister for Works to kindly withdraw that expression. Other hon. members preferred requests similar to

that mentioned by the member for Sussex and the Minister did not use such an expression to them. He singled out the member for Sussex. Therefore the Minister for Works must withdraw.

The Minister for Works: I did not single him out. I merely said that he showed lack of decency. I hold that opinion now.

Mr. Pickering: Surely the Minister is not entitled to aggravate the offence by repeating the expression.

Hon. T. Walker: It is altogether out of order to discuss this matter. If the Minister does not withdraw the expression he must withdraw from the Chamber.

The Minister for Works: The member for Sussex was most offensive in his manner and most offensive in his words.

The Chairman: I would call attention to Standing Order 73 which reads—

Mr. Speaker, or the Chairman, shall order members whose conduct is grossly disorderly to withdraw immediately from the House during the remainder of that day's sitting, and that the Sergeant at Arms do not on such directions as he may receive from the Chair in pursuance of this order; but if on any occasion Mr. Speaker or the Chairman deems that his powers under this Standing Order are inadequate he may name such member or members in pursuance of Standing Order 72, or he may call upon the House to adjudge upon the conduct of such member or members; provided always that members who are ordered to withdraw under this Standing Order or who are suspended from the service of the House under the Standing Order No. 72 shall withdraw from the precincts of the House.

I ask the Minister for Works once more to kindly withdraw the expression to which the member for Sussex has taken exception. That will get over the difficulty. Otherwise I shall have no option but to proceed on the lines laid down by the Standing Orders.

The Minister for Works: The member for Sussex, in my opinion, was offensive in his manner and offensive in his language, and I used words which I honestly believed to be justified. I applied the expression "lack of decency" to him. If I have to withdraw so that the business of the House may proceed, I will do so.

Hon. P. Collier: I suggest, Mr. Chairman, that you no longer permit the Minister for Works, just because he is a Minister, to browbeat you and hon. members. He has been called upon to withdraw on five occasions, and on each, instead of withdrawing, he has repeated the offence. The member for Sussex is entitled to the protection of the Chair. It must be evident to you Mr. Chairman, that the Minister for Works was out of order in making use of an offensive expression, and if he is out of order, the member who makes a complaint is entitled to the protection of the Chair. The Minister for Works should not be permitted to browbeat the House and to repeat what has been judged to be an offence. Unless the Min-

ister withdraws you must take the usual course of reporting the matter to the House.

The Chairman: I ask the Minister to withdraw unreservedly and not comment on what he thought the member for Sussex meant. Will the Minister withdraw unreservedly?

The Minister for Works: I will not.

The Chairman: I must ask the Minister for Works to leave the Chamber.

The Minister for Works: If I have to do that—Good day.

[The Minister for Works retired from the Chamber.]

The Chairman: So long as I am in the Chair, I will carry out the rules of the House.

Debate resumed.

Vote put and passed.

This concluded the Estimates of the Minister for Works.

Colonial Secretary's Department (Hon. F. T. Broun, Minister).

Vote—Office of Colonial Secretary, £9,858:

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. F. T. Broun—Beverly) [9.3]: This year the Colonial Secretary's department excludes the Medical, Health, Homes, etc., and Police Departments. The expenditure for last year exceeded the vote by £17,096. The revenue collected was in excess of the estimate by £9,276, the net amount the Treasury had to provide in addition to the vote being £7,820. The current year's estimate shows an increase on last year's expenditure of £3,455, and it is expected there will be a decrease in the revenue, as compared with the previous year's receipts, of £2,193, making a total net increase of £5,653. The departments in which the expenditure has appreciably increased are Gaols, due principally to the proposed reclassification of the disciplinary staff, amounting to £2,719; Lunacy, increased number of inmates in the asylum, together with increased salaries, £5,522; State Children and outdoor relief, increase of outdoor relief item and increase of 1s. per week to foster mothers, totalling £3,193. The decrease in the revenue as compared with the actual revenue of last year is made up of the following non-recurring items:—Head office adjustment, £800; Aborigines, sale of "Venus," £690; Gaols, maintenance of military prisoners, £286; Harbour and Light, hire of "Penguin" by the Commonwealth, £230; or a total of £2,006. Increases on other items reduce the nett decrease to the figure stated. The Aborigines Department shows a decrease of £7,179, made up of receipts, £4,964, and a proportion of the salaries payable by the Fisheries Department and an actual saving in the contingencies item of £2,267, less an increase of £52 which I will explain when dealing with the items, making a nett saving of £7,179. It may be said that we are making

reductions at the cost of the natives. That is not so. They are being provided as usual, and, in fact, are infinitely better off than they were in days gone by. The manufacture of clothing by the natives of the Carrolup River station has been successfully carried on and it is estimated that there is a saving of 50 per cent. in the cost of clothing made. In submitting the Estimates of the Aborigines Department for the ensuing financial year, I desire to point out that the total amount required to be provided by Parliament is much less than that of previous years. A substantial sum is now received from the Moola Bulla station and from fees charged for the right to employ aborigines. The reduction in the estimated expenditure for the year is largely due to the settlements at the Carrolup and Moore Rivers, the abolition of the lock hospitals in the North and the reductions of subsidies to the missions. The closing of the mission home at Victoria Park and the transfer of the natives to the Carrolup River settlement, and the fact that our own settlements are now receiving children who otherwise would have to go to missions, is responsible for the subsidy in that direction being largely reduced. In the Fisheries Department there is a nett decrease of £1,055. The staff is numerically the same as that employed during 1918, and there are no increases provided in this year's Estimates other than those for annual increments. A certain sum has been set apart on the Estimates for the "Penguin." This is to provide the alterations necessary before the Fisheries Department take over the boat for the extension of the fishing industry. This work is now in hand and it is hoped shortly to have the vessel ready, so that the fishing grounds may be explored to the end that a substantial fish supply shall be provided right through the State.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Has the boat been transferred from the Harbour and Light Department to the Fisheries Department?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: No, she is only taken over for this purpose for, perhaps, eight or nine months. Afterwards, if she is required by the Harbour and Light Department, she will be handed back. In the Friendly Societies and Registry branches there is a net increase of £522, due to increases in salaries. Last year the Estimates of the Colonial Secretary's Department included, in addition to the head office, the following departments: Immigration and Messengers' Exchange, Friendly Societies and Registry, State Labour Bureau, Observatory, and Public Gardens. This year these sub-departments are all shown in separate divisions. In the Gaols Department there is a net increase of £2,719. The number of gaols is the same as last year, namely 16 common gaols and eight police gaols. The increase is due to an amount being provided for the reclassification of warders' and gaolers' salaries to bring them into line with those of the Police Department. In the Harbour and Light De-

partment there is an estimated decrease of £930 in the revenue. The harbour dues show only a slight increase as compared with the actual figures for 1918-19. The shipping strike in the Eastern States during the first portion of the current year meant a large loss of revenue owing to all interstate shipping being held up. Similarly the jetty receipts were affected by the strike, as for some time only the Singapore vessels were trading to the North-West ports. The estimated miscellaneous receipts in this department are £1,632 less than those for last year. This is due to the fact that during the first six months of the year the earnings of the "Penguin" from the Navy amounted to £900, and there was also received £1,000 from the Yampi Sound Mining Co. to meet half the expenses of the vessel's trip to lay moorings near Koolan Island. There will be no receipts from those sources during this year. It is difficult to estimate the harbour dues and jetty receipts these times, on account of the volume of trade fluctuating. In the Lunacy Department there is an increase of £5,522. Each year there is an increase of very nearly this amount. The estimated expenditure is arrived at by taking the actual cost per patient for the year and multiplying it by the number of patients which it is estimated will be resident there during the year. It is estimated that, on an average, the patients this year will number 1,173, which at last year's cost, namely £57 10s., will equal £67,452. The number of patients discharged during the year was 38 and the admissions 165, or 51 fewer than last year. The contingencies expenditure is expected to be considerably higher than last year owing to the high cost of meat, coal, and other commodities. An amount has been added to cover these expected increases. For instance, coal has been increased by 2s. 7d. per ton. On the salaries estimates provision has been made for various increases to the staff and also for automatic increases to the nurses and additional attendants, including an additional fitter and gardener. An amount of £500 has also been placed on the Estimates to cover leave that has accrued to officers on active service, of whom there are still 25 to return. In the State Children Department there is a net increase of £3,193. This seems to be a very small amount, and no doubt it will have to be considerably increased during the year. We are in hopes that we can get down to this limit, but I am afraid we shall not be able to do so. The functions of this department embrace aid to orphanages, grants to industrial schools, maintenance of children boarded out with foster-mothers, payments to women on whom children are dependent, and out-door relief. Each application is dealt with on its merits and the maximum amount is not always paid. The select committee appointed by the House to inquire into the working of this department will shortly produce their report, which, no doubt, will be interesting. Suitable accommodation will shortly be provided for the staff and for the children's court. This is

very badly needed and when the accommodation is provided there will be sufficient room for the court and for the staff.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Where are you shifting to?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: To the old Lithographic Department building in Hay-street. Alterations will shortly be made for the necessary accommodation. We are now looking around also for a suitable site for a receiving home to accommodate 30 infants. As I said when speaking to the motion for the appointment of a select committee, the place we have at present is absolutely unfit and an amount has been allocated on the Estimates to carry out this work. I do not know that there is anything further to say at this juncture. I have at hand all the information hon. members can require when going through the items, and I will do my best to answer their questions.

Hon. T. WALKER (Kanowna) [9.44]: I regret that the hour is so late. The subjects dealt with by the Minister are of so great importance that they deserve considerable time in discussion. I think we might do well to spend the whole of an evening discussing generally the principles covered by the hon. member's offices. Such questions as gaols, the Lunacy Department, and the State Children Department practically deal with the whole of the abnormal psychology of society. I do not know anything which interests people—the most advanced philosophers of our day—and is of a more important and far-reaching nature and more connected with the upbuilding of the people, than these subjects covered by the administration of the Colonial Secretary. And yet I venture to say that it is the most neglected branch of Government that we have. It seems to me that anything will do in this department. In the most perfunctory way the administration passes on from day to day as if it were merely the winding up of the clock and allowing it to run down. There is no spirit of investigation, no spirit of inquiry, and no apparent desire to keep up to date or abreast with the movements of the world in this respect. The Colonial Secretary has to administer a department which deals with the ills of the mind and, may I say, the ills of the souls of men, and yet he apparently is absolutely indifferent to the importance of this gigantic task. I say apparently indifferent, because matters have come under my observation of quite recent date to show the utter inertness of this department, its insensibility to the responsibilities imposed upon it by Acts of Parliament, and the declarations of this assembly. Let us take for instance the Inebriates' Home.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Where is it?

[Mr. Piesse took the Chair.]

Hon. T. WALKER: I want to know. We have an Act upon our statute-book providing for the treatment of those who have become victims of a species of lunacy in consequence of their indulgence in alcohol, and being

victims of alcoholic poison. Solemly we have placed upon the statute that Act and have handed it over to the administration of the Colonial Secretary.

The Colonial Secretary: The Act has been in force a long time.

Hon. T. WALKER: The Act while the Labour Government were in office was put into operation.

The Colonial Secretary: They sent these people to the Whitby Falls.

Hon. T. WALKER: I grant that they were sent there for treatment.

The Colonial Secretary: But I understand it was not suitable.

Hon. T. WALKER: What steps have been taken since? As many steps as could be taken were taken by the Scaddan Government more or less as experiments. In these experiments we had the aid of a man who knew something of that with which he was dealing. I refer to Dr. Montgomery.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Whitby is a nice place. I was there yesterday.

Hon. T. WALKER: Properly carried out with sympathetic management, which aimed at the accomplishment of a duty imposed by the Act, that place would be suitable, but since the Labour Government went out of office it has never had one iota of sympathy. I have heard of old decrepit, nerve-broken women being sentenced to gaol for their hundredth offence of drunkenness.

The Colonial Secretary: I hope you are not blaming me for that.

Hon. T. WALKER: I blame the Colonial Secretary in part because he is administering that Act.

The Colonial Secretary: I have not been there for any length of time.

Hon. T. WALKER: I blame him and his predecessor, but of course do not put the whole blame on him. His officers from the highest down to the lowest are to blame for their apathetic administration of this Act.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Dr. Montgomery was one of the greatest men in Australia.

Hon. T. WALKER: He could be trusted in his treatment of any mental infirmity, whether produced or induced by drunkenness or any other cause, but unfortunately he has not been succeeded by a man of like standard and quality.

Hon. P. Collier: That is the trouble.

Hon. T. WALKER: I have known of men having been brought up for drunkenness because the police had some grievance against them. They were immediately sentenced to three weeks' imprisonment for drunkenness, and while they were stepping out of the dock the police preferred another charge against them of habitual drunkenness, and they were sentenced to a further six months' imprisonment for habitual drunkenness, that is for drunkenness which rendered them helpless and unable to control themselves because they were suffering from a form of insanity. Here we are sending a man to gaol as a criminal for something for which he cannot be held responsible for a moment. I know some who make a jest of it in this

House to-night, who might well go under the treatment themselves. Is that the way we are going to administer the Acts, that are brought in as a recognition of the advanced thought upon these subjects by the leading physicians of the world? Are they for ever to be dead letters? No heed is taken by the Magistracy, and there is scarcely one magistrate in Western Australia but will still look upon drunkenness as a crime.

The Attorney General: The Attorney General cannot dictate to a police magistrate in any sentence that may be imposed.

Hon. T. WALKER: He cannot dictate in that matter, but he can review a sentence, and if it is not in accordance with the law he can draw the attention of the magistrate to it. When outrageous things like this were committed in my term of office in violation of the law I deemed it my paramount duty to circularise the magistrates upon it. It is the duty of the Colonial Secretary to administer the Act committed to him for that purpose. It is inhuman to neglect this Act, and yet callously we sit still and allow these heavy weights, these nightmares, to rest upon the whole community. It is not the only thing. We passed with a great flourish of trumpets in this House not long ago a Bill to amend the Criminal Code, by which we provided for the indeterminate sentences, and we moreover made provision for reformatories for those who were not criminals, but who had by some mental or moral defect got themselves into trouble, but who could be so humanely treated that there was a chance for them in life again without any serious stain resting upon their character. That Act is upon the statute-book and was recently passed by this Parliament. I know of the case of a man who was sentenced to such a reformatory. He was a returned soldier, and had sustained an injury to his brain by shrapnel at Pozieres. The bone had been removed from his brain and another piece of bone grafted on, but this had become dead. In such circumstances this unfortunate man was liable to fits and Jacksonian epilepsy, and in one of these fits he committed what would otherwise have been adjudged to be manslaughter. He was no more responsible for this than a fever patient is responsible for his delirium. The judge taking advantage of the law this Parliament had passed sentenced him to a reformatory for special treatment at His Majesty's pleasure. How is he treated? He is treated as a criminal. He is sent to the Fremantle gaol. He is kept there. He is not under proper treatment, and yet days and weeks pass and there is no apparent urgency at all about his case. We cannot pass a lame dog in the street without having some kind of pity for it. But in the case of a human being, one whose injuries have been occasioned while he was risking his life for the security of our homes, we treat him as if he were a criminal and house him in our gaols. Where is our humanity? What makes it worse is that in this Parliament we passed a Bill to

specially deal with those men whose brains are injured by shell shock, or by any other cause of mental disturbance on the battlefield. We provided that they should have no stigma attached to them, not even that of being a lunatic, and that they should be received for special mental treatment in a special branch of our hospital for the insane. But even that we have forgotten. We did nothing. We are absolutely helpless and take no care at all of our unfortunate men. It is a department which ought to have men at its head not only with large experience, but some knowledge and large hearts that can sympathise, and alertness for action, but there is no more dead or staler department in the whole of the administrative departments of State than this one. It makes me shudder when I think of the possibilities. A man is disordered by accident and yet is treated as if he were a felon, callously thrown out of the way as so much rubbish, to be forgotten and neglected. How callous people can be is shown by another case—a man who in spite of the law was flogged. True, he got a certain remission of sentence as compensation, but no compensation could have paid for that. There is no humanity in the way we are treating our unfortunates. Even the deepest-dyed criminal is a product of the civilisation that has created him—a by-product of the social machine. Remembering that, we ought to be ashamed of our failure to show anything like human sympathy. We all detest and abhor crime, but it is quite a different thing when we have to deal with those who have been brought to their position by the very laws and customs and usages of the society of which they are a part and a product. There is absolute and urgent need of action, action without an hour's delay. When people's lives and future are in our hands, surely we cannot sleep calmly in our beds while knowing that our conduct and activities might relieve that suffering instantaneously, might put the sufferer on the way to relief at once. But these people might as well be mere alien savages in the remote islands of the Pacific, unvisited by the white man. They might as well be animals that we loathe and detest. They are entirely immersed in cruel isolation from their fellows, neglected and forgotten. Ministers can go about their work, draw their emoluments, and wear the feathers of office, so to speak, without feeling one change in their emotions or pleasures. To that state have we come. To-morrow morning not one hour should be allowed to pass without these cruel wrongs being righted. I submit that this kind of callous conduct is the very way to make criminals by producing contempt for all our laws, by making justice abhorred, by making every citizen feel that anarchy would be preferable to this hypocritical form of government. Action should be taken to-morrow morning, and this man should receive treatment. And in selecting physicians to investigate the case,

let physicians that are trustworthy be chosen. I am sorry to have to say it, but I cannot trust Dr. Anderson. The man I refer to was also examined by Dr. Blackall. Dr. Blackall's testimony was honest and humane. But I have no confidence whatever in Dr. Anderson.

Hon. P. Collier: Neither has anybody else who knows anything about him.

Hon. T. WALKER: I say that advisedly. I ask that there be independent medical aid called in, and I suggest a physician whom the whole public can trust, a man who has been connected with other asylums, and who has had charge of injuries to the head sustained upon the battlefield.

The Attorney General: Dr. Blackall has already examined the man, and you know that.

Hon. T. WALKER: I know that, but I ask that Dr. Blackall be brought into consultation for this man's treatment. Dr. Blackall has told us what the illness is and what the injuries are and what remedies are required. He has said those things in open court, but not one attempt has been made to carry out his suggestions. And yet the Attorney General knows that these reports have been made. True, the case is not in his department; but he is a part of the Government, and he can help to move that lethargic part of the Government that sits still while these wrongs are proceeding.

The Attorney General: The hon. member is not accurate.

Hon. T. WALKER: In what am I not accurate?

The Attorney General: In most of the hon. member's remarks.

Hon. T. WALKER: May I say that the hon. gentleman is an Ananias?

The Attorney General: Mr. Chairman, I think the hon. member should withdraw that remark.

Hon. T. WALKER: A thousand withdrawals!

The CHAIRMAN: The member for Kanowna must withdraw.

Hon. T. WALKER: I do withdraw. I want to say that the Attorney General is very glib at uttering that a man is a liar but cannot himself stand the retort "You're another!" This thin-blooded aristocrat cannot stand a real punch aimed in accordance with the rules of the game. I am stating what is absolutely true: I am absolutely not swerving an iota from the facts. The man had this injury. The man in his injured state committed what we would otherwise call manslaughter. The man was examined by Dr. Blackall, who stated what the injuries were and what treatment was necessary. And since those facts were stated in open court, there has not been one step taken to have the man treated as suggested by Dr. Blackall. That is the charge I lay against the Government. I say nothing but inhuman callousness can account for such conduct as that. And it is all through the department. If I were anxious to go on, I could show that similar outrages—for they are nothing else

but outrages—are evident even in the asylum for the insane. There is need for most vigorous and most rigorous inquiry into all these institutions. All of them are symptomatic of the stage of civilisation which we have reached. There is nothing marks a nation's progress more clearly than its care for the infirm of every kind in the community. The evidence we have as to the treatment of these unfortunates, as to the neglect of the laws of the land by those who have sworn to administer them, is in itself an evidence of the mental and moral degradation in which the whole of this State is now immersed. We cannot imprison people for breaking the laws when they are broken by our Colonial Secretary and his officers, and even by the Attorney General; when Ministers of the Crown neglect to put laws into operation, hang them up and fling them aside, and allow the old order to prevail—an order superseded by Acts now on the statute-book. The hour is late, but I should deem it an absolute lack of duty if I did not draw the attention of the Committee and of the public to the need for immediate and drastic action towards the regeneration of the State and towards the recovery of its former position, the loss of which is due to the apathy that has prevailed in the Colonial Secretary's Department.

Mr. ROCKE (South Fremantle) [10.13]: For some reason unknown to me, the Colonial Secretary's Department has always been looked upon as of a lesser degree of importance than any other department controlled by a Minister. With the member for Kanowna (Mr. Walker) I feel that it is one of the most important of our State departments, dealing as it does with the lives and liberties of the people, and largely affecting their welfare from other points of view. I must admit my personal belief that the outlook for many of the adults with whom the Colonial Secretary's Department deal amounts to something very like hopelessness, but the children of to-day I look upon as the hope of to-morrow. One of the sub-departments controlled by the Colonial Secretary is the State Children Department. I have said here before, and I say again, that in my opinion no State can do too much for its children. We have slum children here in Perth and also in Fremantle, whose environment is going to make of them criminals and lunatics unless the State intervenes. It behoves any Government who look into the future to deal with those children in a manner which will give them a chance in life, that chance to which every child born into the world is justly entitled. The member for Kanowna (Mr. Walker) spoke of certain Acts which have been passed with a view to dealing more humanely with those who have become the victims of viciousness, or perhaps of vice, through environment and circumstances, and have received upon themselves a handicap which is very difficult for human flesh and blood to fight against. The hon. member

cited cases where soldiers have sustained such injury in warfare that a small amount of intoxicating liquor drives them into a state of temporary insanity, under which they commit crime which, in their sane moments, they would not think of. It seems to me that the hon. member dealt only with the effect rather than with the cause. If the effect of intoxicating liquor is so great upon these men—and we say that the returned soldier is worthy of every consideration—surely it behoves the Government to give the people at least the right to decide whether the liquor traffic shall be placed under control or not. The amending Act of 1911 provides some measure of local option, but it is an inefficient measure. It does not go far enough. In fact it is so inadequate that it is hardly worth while bothering about because, even if the people decided upon the issues which will be placed before them, the liquor traffic would still remain in control to work its evil influence upon this community. We have only to look around our streets and parks to see that the rising generation is not getting a fair chance, and we say that probably and most likely it is because of an inadequate home influence but, if we go deeper and find out what is the cause of the neglect of parental control, in nine cases out of 10 it is drink. Thus the whole of the future race is dependent, in a large measure, upon the control of this thing.

The Colonial Secretary: You suggest prohibition?

Mr. ROCKE: No, the right of the people to say whether they will have prohibition. That is democratic enough. When the Colonial Secretary was speaking of the work the department had done, he mentioned the sums being paid for the relief of children. It is necessary that these children should be given relief, and it is essential they should have more than they are receiving. It seems strange that the natural mother should receive less than a foster mother. I am not able to discover why. Probably it is because of some idea of departmental government—

Mr. Jones: A kink.

Mr. ROCKE: That a natural mother is able to support her child on less than a foster mother.

The Colonial Secretary: The natural mother has several children as a rule.

Mr. ROCKE: All the more reason why she should have the support of the State.

The Colonial Secretary: You can keep a number cheaper than one.

Mr. ROCKE: If children were not being born into the world, the race would very soon become extinct but, because a natural mother is fulfilling the functions of her office, she is penalised and the struggle is made harder for her than for the foster mother. A great amount of the expenditure of this department is due to the liquor traffic. There is no doubt about it. We have the evidence of medical men and

judges and others who are able to speak. We expend a large sum for the upkeep of gaols, the police, and the Department of Lunacy, and most of it is traceable to the ravages made on human life by the liquor traffic.

The Colonial Secretary: How about the illegitimate children? How about the death of many good men from influenza, leaving their wives and families destitute? Those were not due to the liquor traffic.

Mr. ROCKE: I do not say the liquor traffic is responsible for everything, but it is a factor responsible for a great deal of our public expenses.

The Colonial Secretary: To a certain extent.

Mr. Jones: No, all of it.

Mr. ROCKE: Regarding the betterment of humanity and the better dealing with people who have become breakers of the law, we have a reformatory provided for people worth saving before they get too far into crime but, as has been pointed out by the member for Kanowna, that reformatory has been placed in the Fremantle gaol where all the surroundings are criminal. There is no attempt whatever to distinguish it from any other part of the gaol. One division, I understand, has been set apart, but the environment remains and everything therein tends to drag a man down and make him conscious of the position he is in. That consciousness of itself is not going to reform him. If we are going to have a reformatory system, it must be removed far from our present gaol system and placed under the control of men sympathetic in heart and mind, men who understand the cause of their fellows being in need of the assistance the State is supposed to give them. Matters are made worse by the appointment of the superintendent of the gaol to a position on the indeterminate sentence board.

Mr. Jones: The worst man they could have got.

Mr. ROCKE: Of all the men in the State, that man should have been the last to be selected for the position.

Mr. Jones: I would not put him to look after a dog.

Mr. ROCKE: He is going to be his own judge and to recommend his own work.

The Colonial Secretary: Oh, no!

Mr. ROCKE: I say, oh, yes. I know that gentleman better than the Colonial Secretary knows him. He is going to make regulations for himself to administer, and say, in short, what a fine fellow he is.

Mr. Jones: And occasionally make a mistake under his own regulations and flog someone.

Mr. ROCKE: Yes, as he did in the Fremantle gaol a little while ago, since when he has been on six months sick leave on full pay. I wonder if the ordinary warder in the gaol would receive such magnanimous treatment. I see no reason why there should be such distinction between

the superintendent and an ordinary warder in the matter of sick leave. If it is right for the one man to have sick pay, it is right for the other. With reference to the Fisheries Department, the steamship "Penguin" has been fitted up as a trawler. That vessel is absolutely useless for the purpose. I cannot imagine any responsible man recommending that boat to be fitted up as a trawler. She will never succeed, and the Government might as well decline to spend the money.

The Colonial Secretary: What experience have you had?

Mr. ROCKE: I have been at sea most of my life and I can judge what the "Penguin" can do.

Mr. Jones: That was a nasty one!

The Colonial Secretary: You have been on a whale boat?

Mr. ROCKE: In a breeze when any ordinary trawler could continue working, the "Penguin" will have to be in shelter and a very few days in the Great Australian Bight where she is going to work—

The Colonial Secretary: No, in the north and south.

Mr. Lutey: It will be good-bye if she gets in a typhoon up north.

Mr. ROCKE: If she is going to work down south she will be a failure, and I object to money being expended in that way.

Hon. P. Collier: She is the champion boat on the seas to roll.

Mr. ROCKE: While I believe the fishing industry might be worked up to provide lucrative employment for some of our men, I am certain that boat will be a failure from the start. The Colonial Secretary should make further inquiries before any additional money is spent on her. Some little recognition is being given to the warders of the prison by bringing them into some degree of equality with the police force in the matter of pay. It is high time the services of these men were recognised.

The Colonial Secretary: It is a wonder you agree to that.

Mr. ROCKE: I agree to everything that is good and just. I disagree with everything that is unjust and, while I am a member of this House, I shall speak against injustices inflicted by Ministers, even if the Colonial Secretary is the culprit. I hope better attention will be paid to the department controlled by the Colonial Secretary, and that the Governments of the future will recognise that it is one of the most important departments we have. I hope that every facility will be given to mothers to assist them in the upbringing of their children, so that they will be relieved in some measure from the great strain upon them, and that the State will take a greater responsibility than it has taken in the matter of helping the children placed in an unfortunate position. I do not say for a moment that the State has not done good and great work. It has done good and great work, but there remains a greater work to be done, and I hope the Colonial Secretary will take this matter into consideration and do all in his

power for the rising generation in which the hope of the future lies.

Mr. JONES (Fremantle) [10.28]: I am very pleased that, for the first time since I have been a member of the House, the Colonial Secretary's Estimates have been introduced by a Minister sitting in this House. In the past, unfortunately, members have not been able to give the attention to these most important Estimates that they deserve, because the Minister responsible for rushing them through has really known very little about them. Consequently, we have had to be content with rather unsatisfactory answers. Therefore, I say it is indeed pleasing that we have a Minister here instead of one who sits in another place in charge of this department, or, as with the Estimates of the Minister for Mines and Railways, a Minister who apparently sits in neither House.

Mr. Lutey: There are very few members present on the Government side.

Mr. JONES: I would ask "Hansard" to take a note of the fact that there were 13 members in the House when I rose to speak, in case the "West Australian" should remark to-morrow that there was another troop out, because 13 members cannot make a troop. The Colonial Secretary to my mind is in a most unfortunate position. He has under his control fourteen fairly large departments—too much for one man to manage, and while I am satisfied the present occupier of the position brings to bear on it all his youthful enthusiasm, and while I am quite sure we have there a gentleman who treats every request with courtesy, and is doing his best, I am satisfied that when he realises the colossal task he has undertaken, he will see that the office is really more than one man can undertake. Unfortunately too—and here again I sympathise with the Colonial Secretary—he is cursed with an under secretary who has become an institution in this State and who will no doubt succeed, as he has succeeded with every other Colonial Secretary, in persuading the present holder of the office that he—the under secretary—is quite all right.

The Colonial Secretary: He is a most experienced officer.

Mr. JONES: Possibly the most experienced officer any Government office could have, a tactician whose tactics would have delighted the heart of Machiavelli himself, a kind and courteous man to interview, one who can say nothing in as few words as anyone I have ever met. Recently we have seen in the Press comments upon the admirable playing by amateurs of the opera "Mikado." The characters of the Mikado, the Lord High Executioner, and particularly Poo Bah were eulogised in the columns of the Press. In this particular connection the gentleman who plays the part of under secretary to the Colonial Secretary has no need to assume the rôle of Pook Bah—he is Pook

Bah, and no matter which of the fourteen departments he may control, no matter which one he is interviewed about, it is an easy matter for him to place the subject-matter of the interview on one side. Any complaint made in connection with the administration of the Aborigines Department is placed carefully on one side by the under secretary. As Comptroller of Prisons, he sends a minute to himself as Under Secretary in the Colonial Secretary's Department, and as Under Secretary, he OK's the minute which the Comptroller has just sent up to him. No matter where you go—a man may even be done to death in the mental ward of the Perth public hospital, the matter is brought under the notice of the Under Secretary and hushed up. The ramifications of this tactful and experienced civil servant are wide—his hand is seen in everything. I warn the Colonial Secretary that he is likely to go the way of all other Colonial Secretaries, that he will, if he is not careful, fall under the baneful spell of this most experienced tactician who has led so many Colonial Secretaries into the maze, and that he, too, will muddle along as others have done in the past. The Minister in introducing the Estimates showed a little of that optimism which always exudes from his illustrious chief. I notice from the reports of the Aborigines Department that very little is said, but the part of the report which appeals particularly to me is the reference to the number of natives who have sought the assistance of the department against their employers. Since the inception of the Aborigines Department, the treatment meted out to the natives of the State has been a standing disgrace. The conditions under which natives have been permitted to work have amounted to nothing less than slavery. An employer who gets hold of this form of cheap labour works it for all he is worth, and he pays little or nothing for it. But it is a healthy sign of the times when we find that "Jacko" is becoming slightly more advanced. Numbers of them have acquired sufficient knowledge to enable them to seek the assistance of the department in the direction of adjusting their claims against those people who use them as slaves in order to make a profit, and then offer to pay them with a pocket-knife and a stick of tobacco instead of in hard cash which should be theirs by right. The aborigines question is one that I am satisfied has never been tackled in a way which will benefit the natives, except, perhaps, by the departure which was made when the Moola Bulla cattle station was acquired. It seems to me that the policy of the department is to let them work out their own salvation. I have no doubt the Minister knows as well as I do that the native, as soon as he comes into closer contact with the white man, becomes a degenerate. He acquires all the white man's vices, without getting too many of the few virtues that the white man possesses. The result is that, instead of having either a good civilised black man, or a good

savage, you have neither one nor the other. There are then the bad qualities of both white and black, and the result is a degenerate specimen of humanity. The Moola Bulla cattle station way of dealing with the aborigines is the only possible solution of the difficulty, and I am pleased to find that this station, which was started by the Labour Government, is now receiving recognition from the department—a recognition which was for a long time denied to it. I hope this policy is going to be extended and that the department will, so far as lies in its power, prevent the natives from being exploited by the whites. The effect of the aborigines working as they have done in the past for white employers has had a degrading and degenerating effect. Those of us who have been in the North-West realise what has been the effect of keeping the natives down and employing them without wages. According to the report of the Protector, many natives have had to seek the assistance of the department in the direction of adjusting their claims against white employers. Of course hon. members will understand that it is only the natives who are in touch with the Protector and the police who are able to make claims against their employers. Those natives who are away back in the Kimberleys, and who perhaps see a police officer, or a protector, once in 12 months, are at the mercy of the employers. We know that the native mind is not capable of retaining for any length of time exactly what has happened, so that there must be in the State a great number of natives who are unable to enlist the sympathy of the department. That paragraph in the report of the department referring to the claims of the natives against the employers, tells a wonderful story of the injury that is being done to the aborigines by their employers in the various parts of the State. I believe, however, that the conditions to-day are much better than they were a few years ago, but even as they are, they are far from what they should be. Not only can the native still be exploited, and his labour obtained very cheaply on the North-West stations, but even the white man can incidentally be induced to work for low wages because there is a probability of him being allowed to consort with natives who happen to be on the same station. Anyone knowing the conditions as they exist in the North-West know that that is so. That must have a degenerating effect.

Hon. W. C. Angwin called attention to the state of the House.

Mr. JONES: Before the bells are rung I would draw your attention, Mr. Chairman, to the fact that when I began to talk there were 13 members in the Chamber and now there are 10.

Hon. W. C. Angwin called attention to the State of the House.

Bells rung and a quorum formed.

Mr. JONES: In resuming this discussion I wish hon. members, especially the casual visitors who have just returned to the Chamber, to understand that during the course of my remarks over the last quarter of an hour I lost only three members from the Chamber. There were 13 when I started to speak, and 10 when attention was drawn to the state of the House. Those who have been brought in need not remain on my account, because I know they do not like the hard, rude, working class views which I express. I was dealing with the degrading effect it has on white and black races alike to permit natives to be employed at a cheap rate by the white employers. I realise that the policy of the present Government, an employers' Government, is to assist the employer of labour to get cheap labour wherever possible. I am almost sorry to see that there is a decrease in the Estimates of the Aborigines Department, because I realise that the native must be protected. The white man has despoiled him of his hunting grounds and forced him to kill the white men's cattle in order that he might live. Having dispossessed the original owners of the country we have a heavy responsibility to discharge, so I trust this decrease in the departmental expenditure does not mean that the natives are getting anything less in the way of food and clothing than they are entitled to. I regret that no report from the Fisheries Department is before us. Here, at least, the Minister is making some progress. The fact that the "Penguin" is being fitted out is proof that the department intends to do something, and for this we should be duly thankful. Were it the policy of the Government to assist the very able chief inspector, something could be done to regulate the price of fish, an important item of the people's food.

The Colonial Secretary: We are trying to do that. The fishermen have a monopoly at present.

[Mr. Stubbs resumed the Chair.]

Mr. JONES: I hope the Minister will take it in hand. It is a crying shame that what is probably the most cheaply produced food commodity should be controlled by a ring so callous as to throw its surplus fish overboard rather than sell it cheaply. Only the other day did I discover that the weekly fish meal provided at the Old Men's Home, Claremont, consists of tinned fish. I hope the Minister will not allow the black, chilling iconoclastic hand of his Under Secretary to get in on this question of fish supply; I hope he will deal directly with the chief inspector and endeavour to break up this iniquitous ring controlling fish. Despite the Under Secretary and the Comptroller General and the Superintendent, those three terrific handicaps which the gaols have to carry, I believe we

have here the most humane prison system in the Commonwealth. I realise that we are at least as advanced as any other State in Australia. That does not say that our gaol is perfect, for no gaol could be perfect.

This I know, and it were well if all could know the same,
That every prison that men build is built with bricks of shame,
And bound with bars lest Christ should see how men their brothers maim.

There is a tendency in all Government institutions, whether homes or gaols or hospitals, to treat people all on the same level. A person who comes under the hospital for the insane, or even the old men's home, immediately becomes a thing that is ticketed as No. 1, 2, 3, or 4. The human aspect of the individual is lost in the fact that he is regarded as upon the State, I want to avoid that. I do not wish the English workhouse and their gaol system introduced into Australia. As a democratic country, which is more advanced than most other countries in the world, Australia must realise that our gaols have to be something even higher than a penitentiary. They have to be a kind of mental hospital to which the unfortunate members of society, who have been found out and have not had sufficient cunning to bury their tracks, as many people who are in high positions to-day have, are sent. These people, having been found out, have consequently been sent down to gaol for a period. A gaol is a place at which these individuals should get that mental treatment which will either make them decide not to do that sort of thing again, or give them sufficient cunning to avoid being found out next time they do it. Society does not punish a man for doing wrong, but for being found out. The position at Fremantle gaol is to my mind a most peculiar one. During the last five months the warders have been more contented and the gaol has been better run, and there have been no escapes. As far as I can gather—and I live next door to it—there has been no trouble.

The Minister for Mines: You have been living next door to it for a long time.

Mr. JONES: At one time there was nothing between me and gaol but the Minister's word, and that was fragile enough.

The Minister for Mines: Mine stands for something; yours would never keep you out.

Mr. JONES: During the last five months things have been running smoothly down there.

The Colonial Secretary: That speaks well for the Comptroller General.

Mr. JONES: It speaks well for the fact that the superintendent has been away.

The Colonial Secretary: The superintendent is under the control of the Comptroller General.

Mr. JONES: The Comptroller General has 15 or more departments under him. He simply writes a minute to the superintendent

of the prison, and whatever the superintendent or the Inspector General of the Insane, or the Director of Aborigines, or the Chief Harbour Master, or the Secretary for the Labour Bureau, or the Government Astronomer, or the Secretary for the State Children Department, or any of the other 20 or 30 chief officials who come under his control, say, the Comptroller General, the tweedledum, and the Under Secretary, the tweedledee, are prepared to back up, whether it is a matter of a murder having been committed in the mental ward of the Perth Public Hospital, or whether it is simply a matter of flogging a person by mistake in the Fremantle gaol. The Under Secretary will back up the word of the man who is under him in any particular department. It shows a wonderful esprit de corps, and a wonderful class consciousness, which unfortunately the workers of the State have not acquired, but it is of no use to the State or to the public. It is a thing we can compliment him upon, that is, in the way that he stands behind his officers, but, on the other hand, whatever happens at the gaol it is only a matter of the superintendent saying to the Comptroller General of Prisons, and the Comptroller General whispering to the Under Secretary "We will stand together." As far as I can gather, it appears that a few months ago a man was admitted into the Fremantle prison. There was an unfortunate mistake, and as a result of that the man was flogged. I stood within an ace of getting inside that prison myself.

Mr. Lutey: It might have been you.

Mr. JONES: Suppose I had got in and such a mistake had been made with me.

The Minister for Mines: You would have been wakened up.

Mr. JONES: It is all very well to laugh. The superintendent of the gaol might have minuted to the Comptroller General, and the Comptroller General might have passed it on to the Under Secretary, and the Minister might have ordered them to offer me a public apology, but the public apology would have come too late. Directly the mistake occurred the superintendent found out that he was sick. I want an explanation as to how it was the sickness, which was supposed to be the result of some prisoner knocking him down, occurred at that time. I realise the Colonial Secretary has the hardest row to hoe of any Minister. I know he conscientiously looks after his departments, and I am going to do my best to help him through his Estimates.

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

Progress reported.

BILL—DOG ACT AMENDMENT.

Received from the Legislative Council and read a first time.

BILLS (2)—RETURNED FROM THE COUNCIL.

- 1, Merchant Shipping Act Application Act Amendment.
- 2, Midland Railway.

House adjourned at 11.13 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 5th November, 1919.

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Papers: Denmark lands repricing	1198
Bills: Supply, 3s.	1198
Wheat Marketing, report	1200
Land Tax and Income Tax, 2s.	1200
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Trade with Straits Settlement and Java ...	1209
Financial relation with Commonwealth ...	1210

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

PAPERS—DENMARK LANDS, RE-PRICING.

Hon. J. A. GREIG (South-East) [4.33]: I move:

That there be laid on the Table of the House, the report of surveyors Canning and Lefroy on the Denmark settlement in connection with the repricing of the Denmark lands, together with all evidence given by the settlers in this locality before these gentlemen.

Some time ago, I asked several questions with regard to the further surveys in the South-West and, having received an answer to those questions, I felt somewhat concerned as to what may happen if the settling and handling of that part of the State is not very carefully considered. I am asking for the papers so that members will be able to see for themselves exactly what has taken place and where mistakes have been made, so that those mistakes may be rectified and remedied. I understand the leader of the House is quite agreeable to the papers being laid on the Table.

Question put and passed.

BILL—SUPPLY (No. 2).

Third Reading.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East) [4.35]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a third time.